

The
RUSSIAN
ARMY

from within



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THE RUSSIAN ARMY FROM WITHIN

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BY

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Resident in Russia

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PREFACE

OWING to the unusual interest now taken in Russian military matters, I have been induced to write the following account of the Russian Army from within. This little work, written in less than a fortnight, does not profess to be of a technical nature, but is simply an account of the Russian commanders and soldiers and the impression they made upon me during the twenty-seven years I resided in various parts of the Empire, more especially in Cronstadt, Finland, Petrograd, Krasno Selo, Little Russia and the Caucasus.

W. B. S.

LONDON, *September, 1914.*

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THE COUNTRY AND THE ARMY

CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY AND THE ARMY

IT is now a thousand years ago since the Slavonian chieftains of the ancient city of Novgorod sent a deputation to the Varangian Rus on the other side of the Baltic, begging them to come and rule over them; for their country was great and vast, but there was no order. Although so many generations have passed away since these Vikings came to Russia and laid the foundations of the first Russian state, the above words still apply to the Russia of to-day. Great she is, but there is very little order. This being the case, a year may elapse before she can get her full fighting force into the field. How great her fighting capacity is when properly organised we can judge from the fact that the Empire is three times the size of America and more than forty times the area of France.

A series of excellent harvests and a period of industrial prosperity have tended to heal the wounds caused by the Japanese war much more quickly than might have been expected. The enormous sums of

money borrowed from France, estimated to exceed 600 millions sterling, have helped to replenish the state treasury, to reconstruct the navy that was destroyed at Tschushima and Port Arthur, to construct important strategic railways to the Austrian and German frontiers, and to arm the forces with the very best rifles and quick-firing artillery, which in the Japanese war were frequently entirely lacking just when most required.

The Russian Government, in view of this long-expected struggle with her western neighbours, has for some time been accumulating a gold reserve, with the result that she is said to have 167 million pounds of gold laid by in the Treasury for war expenditure as compared with Germany's £83,000,000. We must remember that Russia is about the only self-supporting European state. Her huge territories stretch in one unbroken line from the Baltic to the Pacific, a total distance of about 7000 English miles. In this vast expanse every product, every mineral required by man, occurs in such abundance that considerable quantities have to be exported. The great forests of the North contain millions of acres of the finest timber, while the industrial region around Moscow and Warsaw supplies the Army and people with all the clothing and textiles they require. South of Moscow there is "Little Russia the Boun-

tiful," with its expanses of corn, wheat, rye, buckwheat, maize, oats and other cereals, its fine vineyards and thousands of acres covered with tobacco and sugar-beet. There is also the rich granary of Siberia, which alone could grow sufficient grain to supply the whole of Europe. It would take volumes to describe the inexhaustible piscatorial, arborial, agricultural and mineral wealth of this Empire. I have, however, said enough to show that Russia could, if necessary, carry on a defensive war for years without feeling the need of importing anything from abroad.

This war, however, will probably not be waged on defensive lines, for the Russians have already invaded Austria and Germany in force at about six different points. In this case they will not require to make use of vast stretches of territory—marshes, morasses and forests—to bring their enemies to destruction, as they did the armies of Charles XII and Napoleon. But whatever kind of war Russia may choose, defensive or offensive, she is a mighty force to be reckoned with by her foes, if they are wise and not too self-confident.

Not only rich in money, which Cicero called "the sinews of war," Russia has more men at her disposal for military service than any other nation in Europe or America. Every year about 1,300,000

men attain the age when they are liable for service. Of this number only 450,000 are taken, for the simple reason that the state has no need for any more. Those who are chosen are physically the best; Russia cannot afford to keep weaklings in her army in a country where the conditions of life are so trying that only men with the very strongest constitutions can withstand them. Owing to the enormous size of the Empire and the hundreds of races and tribes inhabiting it, the total armed strength of Russia is still an unknown quantity. According to Russian statistics, which I see no reason to doubt, the total mobilised standing army with reserves numbers about 6 million trained men, or 20 per cent of the population. In addition to this there is the "Opolchina," or militia, numbering over a million men. The "Opolchina" consists of soldiers averaging between forty and fifty years of age who have served their term in the line and reserves. In spite of their age, many are excellent soldiers, in some respects superior to the troops of the regular army. When Russia was conquered and overrun by the Poles it was the Opolchina of Nishni Novgorod, under the command of Prince Posharsky and the butcher Minin, who led the way to Moscow, drove the enemy out of the Kremlin, and saved the land from the domination of a foreign yoke. During the

invasion of Napoleon in 1812 the Opolchina, under the leadership of the "Pomeschike" (country gentry), also rendered signal service to their country.

After these forces come about 16,000 gendarmes, the pick of the army, and about 35,000 frontier guards, always on a war footing. This admirable body of men, which was organised under M. Witte, the famous Chancellor, probably already has been in action, for its members would be the first to meet an invader crossing the borders. Besides patrolling the frontiers, they are used to track and fight with smugglers who carry on a lively but dangerous business on both the Asiatic and European side. Owing to the high duties on all articles of luxury, and on many of the necessities of life, it pays the lawless to run the gauntlet, just as it did the same class in England during the Georgian and early Victorian periods. The frontier guards, who are continually contending with smugglers and other desperate people, are all picked men—first-class horsemen, excellent shots, enduring and resourceful.

The frontier guards are little known outside of Russia; but the Cossacks have gained for themselves a world-wide reputation for their horsemanship, daring, hardihood and contempt of death or danger. In all, there are about 850,000 Cossacks, drawn not only from the Don, Donetz, the Caucasus

and the Urals, but also from the far-distant provinces of Siberia. The Cossacks are such an interesting body that I will describe them in detail later on, and explain many curious features concerning them that are not known to the general public; for I have lived among them.

**RUSSIA'S STRENGTH IN MEN
AND MONEY**

CHAPTER II

RUSSIA'S STRENGTH IN MEN AND MONEY

FROM the Russian habit of understating the strength of each regiment I am inclined to believe that the effective fighting force is even greater than is officially announced. If the country is now able to raise such an enormous standing army with ease what will she be able to do in another hundred years? Only about 200 years ago Peter the Great was living a peaceful life near the site of the present Charing Cross Station, studying the art of shipbuilding. Russia then possessed no fleet worthy of the name. Her population was about 14 million souls. By the year 1859 it had risen to 74 millions; in 1897 it was 129 millions without including Finland; in 1904 it had reached 143 millions, and in 1906, according to a detailed estimate of the Central Statistical Committee, the total was 149 millions. At the present time those who are qualified to judge put the number at the enormous figure of 180 millions—a notable increase

since Peter "knocked his window into Europe!" As the numbers, roughly speaking, double themselves every fifty years, Russia will be seen to have the largest rate of increase in the Continent; thus she seems to be able to neglect losses that would spell disaster, if not decay, for less favoured lands. In 1892, for example, during the great famine, about 700,000 people perished from hunger and other causes, and in the following year about 300,000 were carried off by cholera; yet these losses do not seem to have affected her in the slightest. Whilst Germany adds to her population at the rate of 1 million souls a year, Britain at the rate of 350,000, and France has practically no increase worth mentioning, "Holy Mother Russia," thanks to the fertility of her own mothers, has an annual growth of 3 million—equal to the whole population of Denmark. In another half-century, without counting her Slav allies in the south, she will have 360 millions of inhabitants, at the lowest estimate. It is apparent that whatever happens, she is able to call any number of men to the colours to continue this war and to fight to the bitter end; whereas for her opponents, Austria and Germany, this is absolutely impossible, for reasons which do not come within the scope of the present work. Even should she by chance be defeated, it will only de-

lay the day when she will be the predominant power in Europe.

Napoleon foresaw this, and his prophecy that Europe in a hundred years would be Republican or Cossack would have come true had not the Republic in France been overthrown and Russia set back a hundred years or more by three great wars—the Crimean campaign, which cost her 100,000 men; the Russo-Turkish war, in which she lost 172,000, and the Japanese struggle, in which she is supposed to have lost about 350,000. In men alone she has been obviously badly weakened, apart from the millions in money uselessly expended in these more or less unsuccessful conflicts. In addition to this, almost every year disastrous famines and epidemics occur in some portion of this vast Empire, to carry off other millions in a less public, but not less dreadful, manner.

In spite of such drawbacks, her power of continuing the war from a financial point of view is probably greater than that of any of the countries concerned. With a revenue of at least £300,000,000 a year, and a war reserve of about £165,000,000, she would be able, if she met with no serious catastrophe, to carry on her part in the present struggle for at least two or three years, easily, for there are several sources as yet untried by which

the necessary funds might be obtained. In addition to the huge revenue, and great natural wealth in cereals, timber and minerals, she has a number of enormously rich monasteries. Some of these possess untold treasure in the shape of gold, silver and jewels which have not yet found their Henry VIII to despoil them.

Among the more wealthy religious establishments I may mention the Monastery of the Troitska, near Moscow; the Pechersk Monastery of Kieff, the Solovetsk Monastery on an island in the White Sea and the Alexander Nevsky Monastery at St. Petersburg. This last is said to have an income of £500,000 a year. It is so noted, in fact, that during the reign of the Tsar Nicholas the monks lent considerable sums to the Crown for the prosecution of the war.

In the event of necessity these establishments, and many more, could be called upon to contribute to the requirements of the State; naturally, however, this measure would not be resorted to except as a last hope.

Russia can also borrow money from the millionaires of Moscow, the nobility, the rich merchants and land-owners. During the last thirty years she has become a great industrial State, with a home market of about 160 million customers, and many

fortunes have been made. Owing to the protective policy of the Government, Moscow, Petersburg, Kieff, Odessa, Warsaw, Lodz and other large cities and towns now contain many wealthy men, whose assets can be counted, if not in millions of pounds sterling according to English reckoning, at least in millions of roubles. In a prolonged conflict these princes of commerce would probably be obliged to lend or to give up a part of their accumulations to the State, as it has been owing to State bounties and the protection of industries by high tariffs that they have been able in a comparatively short time to make such vast fortunes. The very fact that the people of Moscow have just raised £1,000,000 sterling, in a week, for the help of those who will suffer from the effects of this war is eloquent as to the generosity of the inhabitants and the wealth of their "White-walled Moscow"—which is really the heart and centre of the Empire, rather than St. Petersburg.

The State Railways form another immensely valuable asset; in case of need, a considerable sum could be raised on this security. There is also the spirit monopoly, which brings in a revenue of at least 90 millions a year; the tobacco monopoly, too, is owned by the State and is capable of great extension, for tobacco can be grown in large quanti-

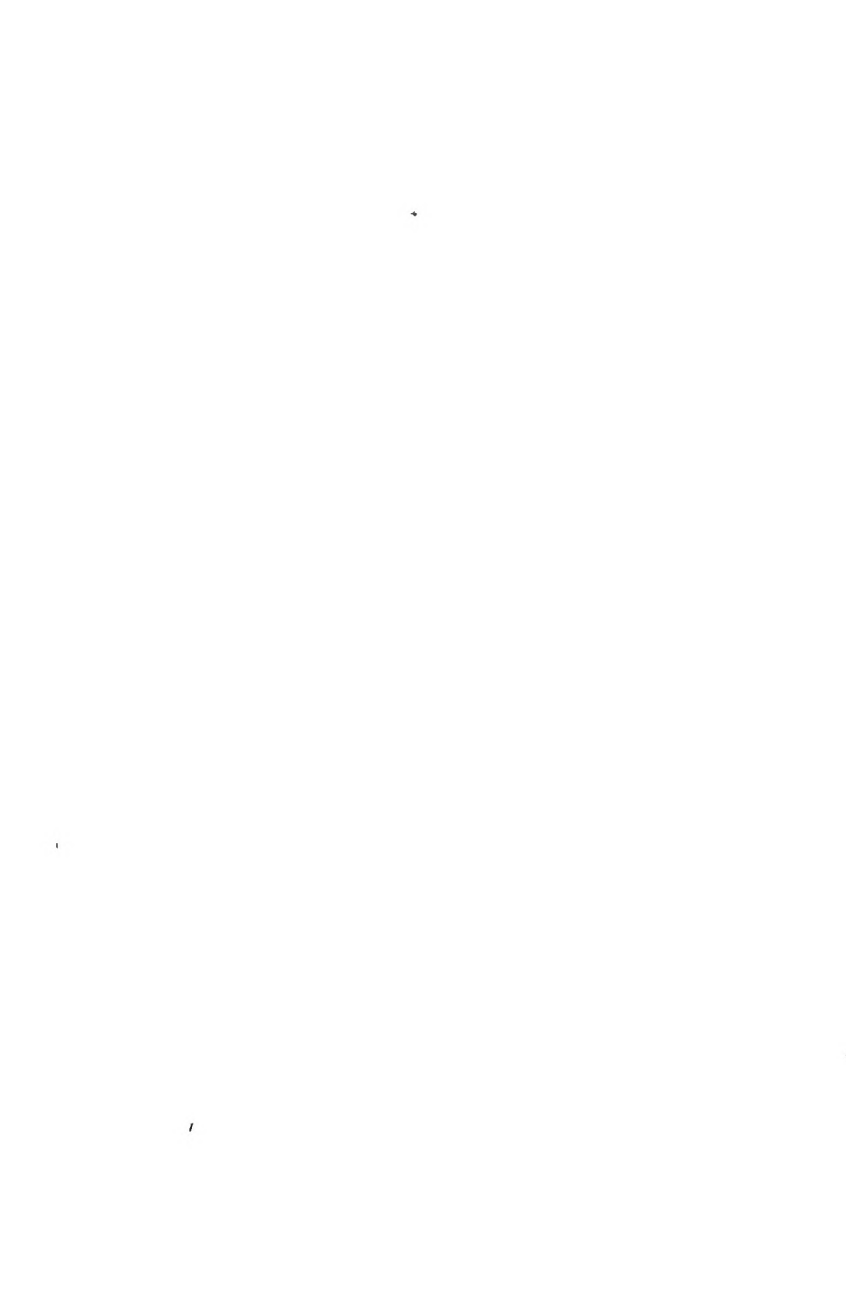
ties and is extremely cheap. Further taxation of the people, however, would be a dangerous expedient, as the tax-paying capacity of the peasantry has been forced to its highest limit, and an increase of the exactions might lead to a revolution, which could be more disastrous to Russia than a victory of the Germans.

Internal disorders, in fact, might prevent Russia from continuing the war until Germany was completely exhausted. At present, according to advices I have received from St. Petersburg, the intention is to fight until the overbearing might of Prussia is a nightmare of the past; this intention the Russians will probably carry into effect unless dissensions in Finland, Poland, the Baltic Provinces, South Russia and the Caucasus compel a peace with the enemy. So far, there are few signs of this diversion of energy.

As regards her food supply, there is probably more than sufficient now that the grain exports via the Baltic and the Black Sea have been stopped. The enormous amount of cereals that Russia annually exports to England, Germany, Holland and the Scandinavian kingdoms will for the time remain in the country, and—a curious paradox—the price of food will be lower in war time than in peaceful years. In case of need, quantities of grain,

cattle, and horses can be obtained from Siberia, a territory which under proper cultivation could supply the whole of Europe with food. From these comments on the situation it will be easily realised that Russia, as regards men, money and natural resources has nothing to fear from a continuation of the struggle for which she has been preparing for many years.

THE PEASANT—THE BACKBONE OF
THE ARMY



CHAPTER III

THE PEASANT—THE BACKBONE OF THE ARMY

THE Russian Army is recruited principally from the peasant class and from various nomadic races inhabiting the Eastern provinces. It is estimated that in all there are about 120 million peasants in the Russian Empire, and probably no body of men in existence is so hardy as this, upon which the future of the country largely depends.

Their physique is very fine as compared with that of other European races; they are, however, intensely ignorant and superstitious, and too frequently the victims of terrible famines. In most Russian villages there are no doctors or trained nurses, and it is no wonder that the death-rate is appalling. When a peasant is taken ill, only two remedies are available as a rule, a hot bath, and the "Feldshär"—who is generally an old soldier with a little rudimentary knowledge of surgery picked up when on military service. He is, in fact, a kind of rural Dr. Sangrado, and if blood-letting

and the "banja" (the vapour bath) do not help, then the patient must die—for "such is the will of God!" Some villages have the questionable advantage of a "znarcharka" or wise woman, who firmly believes in herbs, drugs, and incantations. A few of these women are undoubtedly very skilful, but I have reason to know that the majority of them are gross charlatans, who kill more people than they cure.

If the mortality is enormous, however, the birth-rate is astonishing. The "baba," the simple peasant woman, glories in the number of her offspring; if half her children die, she consoles herself with the saying, "Bog dal ee Bog vzyal"—God gave and God took. But God, one must think, has little to do with this vast mortality; it is generally the result of ignorance, impossible sanitary conditions, poor food, and a struggle for life against an inhospitable climate and bad soil.

In spite of these adverse conditions, the peasantry increase at such a rate that I have heard officers boast that the "baba" would conquer the Germans by the number of her children, without counting the men. Every woman has on an average from six to twelve, of whom about half survive. Thanks to her, the people grow at the rate of 3 millions a year; the Germans increase only at the rate of a

million. From this hardy stock the Russian Tommy Atkins is chiefly supplied. Of course the Little Russians, Tartars, Finns, Lithuanians, Tchoovash, Khirgise, Esths, Poles, and Circassians send a large contingent, but the bulk and backbone of Russia's grey-coated millions come from the Krestjane, or peasant classes. The ordinary peasant, the man who has built up the Russian Empire with his blood and his toil, is not a big man; he is of medium stature, broad-shouldered and sturdy, with square forehead, square jaw, regular Arian features, and a flowing beard, unless he comes of Tartar or Finnish extraction. In short, the pure Russian is an Arian like ourselves, with a considerable admixture of Scandinavian blood in his veins—especially in the Northern Governments, where the finest Rus or Russian types are found.

The South Russian, of the beautiful, fertile land of the Ukraine, is usually tall and muscular, but he has not the energy, tenacity, or endurance of the Great Russian from the North.

The Tartars also make good soldiers, and as a rule are extremely hardy, temperate and trustworthy—so reliable, in fact, that often the most important posts are entrusted to their care. Not having the weakness for vodka common to the Russian soldier, the Tartar can be depended upon in

a crisis to keep perfectly sober. He is, however, believed to be more cruel, probably owing to his Mongolian strain, which makes him, when roused, callous to human suffering and reckless of human life.

The typical pure Russian is a big-hearted man. Unlike the Tartars, Finns and other Mongolians, he is not spiteful. When injured he seldom endeavours to be revenged on his enemy, like the Tartars, Bashkirs, Khirgise and other Turanian races. If he is a true and typical son of Russia he endeavours to forget the injury, and relieves his feelings by spitting, swearing, or simply by saying, "Bog S'vam" (the Lord be with thee), meaning that he leaves it to God to settle the account.

As a rule the Russian conscript carries with him into the Army many of the best as well as the worst qualities; he remains careless, procrastinating, happy-go-lucky, slavish, superstitious and generally exceedingly ignorant. In fact, the majority of the recruits—about 70 per cent—cannot read or write when they enter the Tsar's service. It then devolves upon the officers to "lick these shock-headed peasants into shape" and to convert them into smart soldiers—a long and painful process. But if the officers have patience, the finished material is excellent. The practice of keeping the people in ignorance, for state reasons, makes it easier

to govern these teeming millions in peace; but when war breaks out and the Government requires well instructed men to defend the country and carry out orders intelligently, the short-sightedness of this policy immediately makes itself evident. This fact is so patent that we may safely say, should the Germans be victorious in this war, that it will mainly be owing to the illiteracy of the Russian soldier and the want of thoroughness in the training of the officers. Physically and mentally the soldiers and officers are equal, if not superior, to the Germans, and are brave to foolhardiness. But their want of training and education will be found, time after time, to place them at a great disadvantage with their more instructed Teutonic opponents, who are not only painfully accurate, but as a rule extremely well educated. The very fact that they dare to measure their strength—though far inferior in numbers and resources—with the allied might of Russia, France, England, Belgium and Servia shows that they regard their superior education, compared with the Russian, as a great and valuable asset.

Yet, if the average Russian soldier is not equal to the Teuton in this respect, he has qualities which have many times placed him on a pedestal and helped to build up the great Empire. At Eylau,

his stubbornness and contempt of death evoked the admiration of Napoleon, who, on seeing how the Russians stood their ground, exclaimed: "One has not only to kill them, but knock them over." At Borodino, Sevastopol, Port Arthur and many other terrible scenes of slaughter, we have all seen what the simple grey-coated soldier is capable of when called upon. When led by one in whom he has confidence, no hardship, privation, or act of heroism seems too much for him, especially if he is in sympathy with the cause for which he is fighting.

Under Souvoroff and Koutesoff the Russian soldier withstood the best troops of Napoleon, and frequently defeated them; under Radetsky, Skobelloff and Linevitch he has shown equal bravery. The finest soldiers in the Army are, without question, the Guards, who are usually stationed in and around St. Petersburg. This splendid body of men, usually numbering 200,000, is not only better paid and better fed than the ordinary troops of the line, but also better trained and educated. In times of crisis, during revolutions, or when prospects of victory abroad have been at their lowest ebb, it has been the Guards who, time after time, have saved the dynasty and secured victory. Should the tide of war go against the Russians, it will probably be the Guards who again restore success.

Although the soldier is so formidable and self-sacrificing in war, in time of peace he is, in many ways, a veritable child. In the barracks he learns to read and write, and frequently practises some handicraft which serves him in good stead when he returns to his native village—no more a rough and ignorant country bumpkin, but in some respects a “man of the world.” He also learns to drink vodka and to swear like a trooper—two accomplishments which might very well be dispensed with. In one of Tolstoi’s plays, “The Fruits of Culture,” we have a typical specimen of one of these old soldiers, who has certainly learned more evil than good during his term of service. But if some of the weak ones go under, there are many who benefit by military training and return to their villages, men in every sense of the word.

Such a type I met a few years ago at Kostroma—a man who had been all through the campaign with Koorapatkine. A more manly, modest soldier I have never seen in any country. Notwithstanding the fact that he had gone through the most terrible experiences, and had faced death a hundred times, he was as simple in his demeanour as a child.

If army service does not improve the conscripts’ morals, it certainly improves their wits. In

the first years of service they are simply an un-reasoning machine, never thinking, but obeying every order without judgment. If asked a question, the conscript does not reply "I do not know," but "I cannot know." If questioned as to his reason for doing a certain thing, he does not dare to state his reason, but simply replies "Prekazano" (it is ordered). This slavish and unthinking obedience to orders often leads to very serious mistakes, and still more frequently to very comical incidents. The anecdote of Catherine giving an order to a soldier to have her dog, Cumberland, stuffed, and the soldier almost carrying out the order on the person of the English Ambassador, after whom the animal had been named, is only one instance of what implicit obedience, without thought, may lead to. But this quality is best illustrated in the following anecdote of an incident which is said to have actually occurred in a Russian garrison town.

An officer asked a recruit:—

"Now what should you do in the event of disturbances breaking out in this town if you were ordered out on duty?"

"Shoot," was the answer.

"Very good! But supposing your father and mother happened to be among the crowd?"

“Shoot them all down.”

“Splendid! But tell me now, if you were in the open field—in camp, for example—and should come across a cow or a calf, what should you do?”

“Shoot them down, your Highness,” Ivan replied, with great gusto.

“Nonsense! You should take them by the horns and lead them to the ‘Generalska’” (the wife of the General).

Here followed a momentary pause, and then the officer continued:—

“But if at night time you met His Excellency the General himself, a long way from the camp in the dark, what would you do?”

“Shoot him down.”

“Nonsense!”

Ivan thought deeply for a moment, and then replied triumphantly:—

“Well, if I should not be allowed to shoot him down, then I ought to take him by the horns and lead him to the ‘Generalska.’”

This anecdote may appear far-fetched, but while I was staying at the Russian camp of Tsarkoe-Seloe, incidents occurred even more incredible.

IVAN: THE RUSSIAN TOMMY ATKINS

CHAPTER IV

IVAN: THE RUSSIAN TOMMY ATKINS

AS regards physique, the Russian soldier on the whole is very fine indeed. I should say that on the average he is not so tall as the English soldier, but is larger-boned and broader-chested. Although he is hardier than the average Britisher, he is physically not so strong, energetic or active, mainly owing to the wretched quality of the food supplied him. Officially, Ivan Ivanovitch is supposed to get more than most other nations, but in practice this does not work out.

The standard in Russia, as regards height for military service, is very low compared with our own. It begins at five feet for infantry and five feet three inches for cavalry. This is surprising, for very many tall men are to be found in Russia, especially among the Lithuanians, the Little Russians, the Cossacks, the Siberians and the Tartars, many of whom are over six feet. But the typical Russian, the backbone of the army, as I have before observed, is not a tall man; he is of medium size,

fleshy and thickly built. When pure and unmixed with Tartar blood, he is not unlike many of the men I have seen in the north and east of England. In some of the northern governments and in the Baltic provinces, where there is a strong infusion of Scandinavian blood, the resemblance to the fair, ruddy Englishman of the east coast is still more striking. The conquest of the people in the Middle Ages by the savage Tartars and Mongols from Asia has, however, modified the appearance as well as the character of a large section of the population. Physical deterioration is particularly observable in the great manufacturing centres, where men, liable to serve, are frequently rejected. In the country districts the proportion of men rejected by the military doctors is, comparatively speaking, very small. Other causes of deterioration are the dreadful famines and epidemics. The absence of doctors and the consequent spread of disease has much to do with the impaired physique of a large portion of the people. The immoderate use of vodka, a spirit distilled from rye, is one cause of the sickness, poverty and physical and moral retrogression among the peasantry and the soldiers of all classes. On the whole, however, the Russians are a strong and hardy people, mainly because the conditions of life are so severe.

As the majority of the peasants are practically vegetarians it is not an expensive business to feed the Russian army. The soldiers' diet mostly consists of cabbage soup, porridge, potatoes, peas, beans, good wholesome rye bread, macaroni, garlic, fish, lard and various dainties cooked in sunflower seed oil. On feast days and holidays they are plentifully supplied with vodka, usually at the officers' expense; for like their men the Russian officers are fond of liquor and extremely hospitable. As a rule the men only have half a pound of meat a day and about three pounds of black bread, which is almost as nourishing as meat, and, I believe, far more wholesome. Moreover, it has been observed that men who are moderate consumers of meat and vodka recover from their wounds sooner than those who eat much flesh. One of the great faults of the Russian army is its poorly managed commissariat, which during the Turkish and Russo-Japanese wars caused the loss of many thousands of men. Soldiers who returned from this war state that they had to subsist on maggoty biscuits and beans, whilst thousands of horses died for want of provender. After the war was over there was a good deal of hanging of unfortunate Jewish contractors, but the greater culprits were allowed to go free. So long as the Russian Government persists in the questionable prac-

tice of paying its officials and public servants about half the wages due to them this evil will never be eradicated. It is gratifying to know that every year as the people become more enlightened the taking of bribes is becoming more rare.

The pay of officers usually averages from £3 to £10 a month, according to the standing of the regiment. The salary of a general is not extravagant, and varies from £300 to £500 a year. In order to lessen the expenditure incurred in keeping up their households every officer is permitted to keep one or more *djenshiks*. (A *djenshik* is a soldier who serves his superior officer, without pay, in return for his board and lodging.) The majority of Russian officers are very generous to their servants, generally giving them pocket money and presents. As a rule the men prefer to serve their officers, particularly when the latter are popular. It relieves them from the trying and monotonous duty of living in barracks and eating soldiers' fare, which although plentiful and nourishing is very rough and simple.

Under the influence of his superior officer, the *djenshik* often becomes more refined than his companions, and acquires a taste for reading and the pleasures of life. In his dress and habits he becomes clean and neat, and gains some knowledge of town life and foreign countries which he relates

to an astonished village on his return. As a rule the relations between officers and their subordinates are quite paternal; and an officer when addressing a soldier calls him "little brother," "friend," "little pigeon," and the soldier in return calls his commanding officer "little father" or "brother."

Russian officers of all ranks are far more sociable and less reserved than those of other nations. In fact I have frequently seen a simple soldier approach a Colonel or General and ask him for a light or some small favour as a matter of course. The soldiers have even nicknames for their favourite officers, whom they regard as friends, advisers and *in loco parentis*.

An officer is supposed to know everybody and to be a kind of walking encyclopædia or "Enquire Within" for everything, very similar to our old country parsons. If a soldier's wife has twins, if the mare has foaled, or if the children have the measles the officer is consulted in all seriousness and his advice is taken, although he may be as ignorant as the soldier who consults him regarding the happy or unfortunate occurrence. Officers frequently laugh and joke with their men and call them *molodzie* (bucks) and *tovoratzs* (comrades). The simple Russian private would never dream of taking a liberty or being unduly familiar in return

for this friendliness; for an officer is always an officer in the eyes of the soldier; also a *barin* (gentleman), whether familiar, intoxicated or sober. The officer is *obrazovanne* (educated), a man of culture, while the private himself is *negramotne* (not educated, ignorant of the art of reading and writing). In the Russian army and also in the Russian classes generally all men are brothers in a different way from that in which any other country regards its people. When duty and work are over social and class distinctions are allowed to sink into the background for the time being.

These peculiar patriarchal relations between officers and men are admirably exemplified by the following incident which was related to me during the siege of Plevna when I happened to be in Russia. After losing at the rate of 16,000 men a day in storming the almost impregnable position of the Turks, some of the soldiers of the guards began to be slack in advancing to the attack, which meant certain death to other thousands. An officer of the guards observing this hesitation among his men, galloped up to his regiment, and thus addressed them: "Shame on you, lads. What have you to lose in comparison with me? You will lose your black bread, cabbage and *chlopee* (bugs), whereas I have a beautiful wife, children, money,

houses and a palace. Then follow me, lads, do not fear the Turks." This rough exhortation pleased the soldiers; again they rushed to the attack with their brave officer and did not stop until they had taken the redoubts.

The majority of the soldiers are unmarried, as early marriages are not encouraged by the authorities. During the term of service the soldier has to take his place in the line. But the paterfamilias, the head of every peasant household, frequently compels his young sons to marry the strongest and most buxom village lasses he can find; for strength and a capacity for hard work are the qualities chiefly sought by the father in choosing a helpmate for his sons. The latter are not consulted in the least; young men are not considered capable of selecting a suitable wife. During the son's absence, the "soldatka"—the soldier's wife—often has a very hard time of it with her father-in-law. And there is another point: as the Russian peasant-woman is amative and not over-chaste, it not infrequently happens that there is an addition to the family during the husband's term of service. If the little stranger is a boy, all goes well; it does not matter; for the more boys there are the more land there will be for each household when the communal property is redistributed. But if the new

arrival is a girl, there is trouble, for girls are not wanted. The land is distributed according to the number of souls, and as women are supposed to have only "vapour" (*par*) and not a soul, and can neither do a man's work in the fields nor serve in the army, no share is allotted to them. Generally, however, the husband is forgiving and good-natured, and makes every allowance for the frailty of his women-folk, saying in effect, "Why should I be so hard on a weak woman?"

The Cossacks, who have Tartar, Turk, and Gothic blood in their veins, are not so easy-going, if I can credit some anecdotes I heard concerning their treatment of women after the last Turkish war. The Russian soldier is simply a "child of nature," as a Russian General of my acquaintance remarked. He is easily amused, and easily satisfied, for his-wants have been reduced to the minimum. Give him a few ounces of "machorka"—a coarse black tobacco grown in Little Russia—a concertina, an old newspaper to use as cigarette-paper, and he is as happy as a king. If you can add to these luxuries a small bottle of vodka (a "Witotchka," so named jokingly after the Minister of Finance who first ordered vodka to be sold in these small bottles), costing fivepence, he is then supremely favoured. Inspired by the fiery spirit, his own spirits rise in proportion, and

he shows his overpowering delight in dancing fast and furiously, certainly with more ability than grace, the "Kamarinska" or some other favourite measure. He is passionately fond of singing, and spends long hours alone composing and improvising plaintive songs in praise of his sweetheart, his village, his horse, or even his favourite general if he has one. Wherever I have wandered through the Russian Empire I have met the sturdy, grey-coated fellows marching and singing—in the steep rocky defiles of the Caucasus, on the long steppes of Little Russia, on the banks of the Volga, in the camp at Krasno Selo, Finland, or in barracks at Cronstadt or Petersburg. Singing in the ranks is held to be of great importance, and is encouraged by the officers.

The chief singer, who marches in front of each company and gives the opening lines of the verses, receives extra pay and many marks of favour. General Annenkoff once said to me, "The soldier who sings marches on to victory." Some of the melodies are sad, of others the words are "risky"; but many, especially among the Cossacks, are full of life and vigour. Without vodka, music, song and dance, and frequent "prasniks" (holidays), the existence of a soldier would be unbearable; for what with hard toil, constant drill, poor pay and not over-

pleasant food he has usually not a good time of it in barracks, unless he can get private work.

When well treated, the men are exceedingly attached to their officers, and no sacrifice is too great for them. They set little value on their own lives or on anybody else's when it is a question of duty or of fighting. "Shezn Copjeka"—"Life is a farthing," is one of their favourite proverbs. Their religious character is seen in conflict, for they look on a battle not as a sanguinary fight, but as the defence of their faith, Tsar, and country. In the brave struggle of the "Varjag" against unequal odds at Chemulpoo the Russian sailors, according to the evidence of their confessor, all through that terrible encounter, whilst working the guns, continually prayed to their Saviour and all the Saints, believing that aid would thus come to them against the unbelieving Japanese.

The average Russian, even of the lower classes, is extremely fond of his native country (*matooshka Rossija*)—our little Mother Russia—as he calls her, although she is frequently a very severe parent to him. He despises and pities the *Njemtzee* (the Dumbones), a term by which he implies all foreigners who cannot speak his difficult tongue. "What is life to a Russian is death to a foreigner" is a saying continually on his lips, and rightly too; for,

without complaint, he can stand greater cold, more intense heat, keener hunger and privation than any other European. His powers of endurance are marvellous; I have often seen Ivan asleep in the snow in winter-time or stretched out snoring on the wet and sodden grass in the autumn. These experiences seem to do him no harm whatever. Every Saturday he goes regularly to the *banja* and there scrubs and boils himself until he is as red as a lobster and every trace of cold has been driven out of his system. The heat in these *banjas* is terrific, and woe to the *Njemtsee*, or foreigner, who tries them if he has not been gifted with a strong heart and a tough skin.

In the country districts, where the people are veritable "Adam's children," as a Russian officer described them, it is their great pleasure to heat the *banja* like a furnace and then rush out in a nude condition, rolling themselves in the rough snow, even when the temperature is fifteen to twenty degrees below zero. When there is no snow handy, they break a hole in the ice of the nearest river, which is frequently two or three feet thick, and have a dip. They then hurry back to the warm and comfortable *banja* to restore their circulation.

Truly what is life to a Russian is death to a

foreigner, and the ordinary conditions of service in time of war, except the actual fighting, are really not more arduous than the ordinary life of the Russian in his home.

Although the relations between officers and men are exceedingly democratic, discipline is most severe; grave infringement of the *voenoi oostav* (military code) is visited with death. But, as I have said before, human life is valued lightly in this country, especially among the peasantry, and execution does not appear so horrible and cruel to them as it would to us.

When one calls to mind the extreme severity of the military code under Nicholas I, Peter the Great and Catherine II, the stringent regulations now in force in the Russian Army appear quite mild compared with those in the "good old times" about which people are so fond of prating. Beating or cuffing the soldiers is strictly forbidden, although this regulation is sometimes overlooked by the sergeants.

When we take into consideration the inexhaustible resources in men, money and material which are at the disposal of the Russian Government it is difficult not to believe that Russia will emerge victorious from this terrible racial and political struggle against the combined forces of Austria and Germany, pro-

vided that her officers and generals are on a line with her brave and hardy soldiers, and that the alien races subject to her sway remain loyal during the war.

UNIFORM, ARMS, AND ARTILLERY

CHAPTER V

UNIFORM, ARMS, AND ARTILLERY

THE uniform of the majority of the soldiers of the line is simple in the extreme. It has, however, been found so practical that many of our own troops are equipped with an outfit which is strikingly like that worn by the Russian infantry; the cap is the same in shape, and there is a strange resemblance between the grey overcoats worn by the soldiers of both nations. The uniform is warm, strong, and exceedingly cheap. All unnecessary ornament is dispensed with. The rough grey coats and the strong, waterproof topboots, the latter frequently made by the soldiers themselves, give the men a very attractive and business-like appearance. In the summer the men wear clean, white linen blouses which are not only cheap but very serviceable.

The infantry are armed with what they call a "3 line" rifle, which I believe is a modification of the Krag Jorgan weapon, dating from 1891. It is sighted to 3000 paces, but I am informed that it

will kill at a distance of two miles. This weapon is simple in construction and exceedingly accurate.¹ A Russian officer told me that it has such penetrating power that he has known a bullet fired from it to pass through a thick tree and kill a fowl on the other side. The army rifle holds five cartridges, which can be fired singly or in rapid succession. During the last Japanese War a considerable portion of the forces were armed with Q.F. Field Guns (1902 model), which fired a 13½ lb. shell with a muzzle velocity of 1950 feet a second. Owing to the defects of the artillery in the Japanese War Russia sustained very severe losses. When I

¹ The new warfare is with rifles with twice as much muzzle velocity, and the bullets, hardly thicker than a lead pencil, are jacketed with steel or nickel. A man might be shot clean through the abdomen and walk to the hospital in the rear of the battlefield. Such cases are on record. At the range of action under modern conditions the bullets from high-powered rifles make a clean-cut wound, frequently passing through bone without splintering and pushing aside arteries without cutting them.

Great Britain uses the Lee-Enfield rifle, caliber 7.7 mm., the bullet coated with cupro-nickel. French soldiers are equipped with the Lebel rifle, caliber 8 mm., with bullets coated with nickel. Germany employs the Mauser rifle, caliber 8 mm., with bullets steel and copper coated. Russia uses Mossin-Nagant rifles, caliber 7.62 mm., with bullets cupro-nickel coated. Austria's small arm is the Mannlicher, caliber 8 mm., with a steel sheet coat over the bullet.

was last at Krasno Selo, only a few batteries of the new 15-pounder quick-firers (Schneider-Creuzot) had arrived from France, and the army was using the old Krupp guns. The men had, in fact, hardly had time to become proficient with the new weapon when the war broke out, which partly explains the terrible losses among the artillery at the Yalu and in other battles, where the Russian guns were completely demolished by the terrible fire of the Japanese. Since then the Army has been supplied with modern quick-firing guns constructed according to the latest French models. This should put them on an equal footing with the Germans. Many of their regiments have also been supplied with a new rifle. This is also believed to be equal in every way to that of the Germans.

The rifle, however, is not the favourite weapon of the Russian soldier; he still pins his faith to the bayonet, therefore getting at close quarters with his opponent whenever possible. Being heavy and muscular in build, and almost without nerves, he can use this weapon with shocking effect. During the storming of Port Arthur the brave Japanese were driven back time after time at the point of the bayonet. It is said that they lost about 80,000 men in endeavouring to take this fortress. According to the Army reports 80 per cent of the Japanese casu-

alties were caused by the bayonet charges; 20 per cent by shot and shell. Even in the days of Souvoroff, Catherine's great general, the soldiers frequently forgot to use their rifles in their anxiety to come to close quarters with the enemy. Souvoroff himself believed in the bayonet above any other weapon, and used to say to his men: "Pulja doorak no shtyck molodets" (the bullet is a fool, but the bayonet is a brick).

So far as I am able to judge the Russians, both officers and men, are not at all efficient with the sword, that most ancient but very effective weapon. Perhaps the majority of them are too heavy, short, and lethargic to become good swordsmen. The Cossacks, however, are very expert with the sword, and so are the Poles, who have a more lively temperament than the average Great Russian. But if the soldiers are slow they are sure. It is their stubbornness and their inability to know when they are beaten which makes them such formidable opponents in a prolonged war. The longer the present war lasts the more formidable the Russian soldier will become; his patience is marvellous and he has no fear of death. As previously stated, he will never cease to fight for any cause which appeals to his imagination or to his religious fervour.

These qualities were noticed during the Russo-

Turkish campaign; the cartoons of that day represented the soldiers as lions and the officers as asses. In the Russo-Japanese War the officers, with some few exceptions, did not particularly distinguish themselves, and had it not been for the indomitable bravery of the rank and file the disasters would probably have been far greater than they were. But the bitter lessons learnt then have not been forgotten, and I am informed, on the authority of various military experts, that many useful reforms have been carried out in the Army since 1905. This year was one of the blackest and saddest of Russia's tragic and sanguinary history.

Under the control of the late Grand Duke Mechail the Elder, who was chief of all the artillery, this arm numbered 6000 guns of various dimensions. The different kinds of ordnance include light artillery, mountain guns, horse-artillery, mortars, howitzers, and the heavy siege guns, the majority of which are constructed at the Oboochoff, Sestoret'sk, and Leteinnaja cannon works. Many siege guns mounted at Cronstadt and other fortresses were made by Krupp of Essen.

The field artillery (quick-firing guns) which I saw when last at Krasno Selo, came as a rule from the famous Schneider-Creuzot works in France. Nothing better for field work could be designed

than these improved French quick-firers; they are alleged to be far superior to the cannon turned out by Krupp's. It is a question whether the Russians possess any siege guns to match those used by the Germans against Liege.¹

The cavalry are also supplied with machine-guns of various makes. An artillery brigade usually consists of six batteries; a division has three batteries. Each battery contains eight 3-inch field guns. The

¹ *Re* Creuzot-Schneider gun, Major Harry G. Bishop writes in his work *Elements of Modern Field Artillery*:—

“Other nations began by pooh-poohing this gun—Germany in the lead—then passed to the state of modifying their existing equipment, and ended by throwing it all in the scrap-heap and building an artillery equipment on the same general lines as the French. This is the present rapid-fire gun, which the entire world, including the United States, has been forced to adopt, against its will, and at an expense of millions of dollars.

“The guns in use during the Russo-Japanese War by both sides, though often spoken of as ‘rapid-fire’ guns, were not the guns above referred to. They were what is technically known as ‘accelerated fire guns,’ a class falling between our 3.2 gun of 1898 and our present true ‘rapid-fire gun.’ The true rapid-fire gun, therefore, received no test in this war. Its first appearance on a battlefield of any magnitude was in the recent Balkan War. Accurate or detailed accounts of its performance there are lacking, at the present writing, but it would appear from such reports as have been received concerning it, that this supreme test will not cause any radical change in the gun or in the adopted principles of its technical and tactical use.”

horse artillery are usually furnished with six quick-firing Schneider-Creuzots of three-inch calibre. Owing to her almost inexhaustible supply of horses, Russia is able to procure the very finest animals for these departments of the Army, and this is as well, for the dragging of the heavy guns over every kind of ground tests the toughest steed. The horses I saw at Krasno Selo were powerful and wiry; and one sees how it is that the Russians can bring artillery into action so quickly. The Cossack artillery particularly impressed me, not only by reason of the strength and muscle of the horses, but because of the admirable skill and agility of the gunners themselves when executing a manoeuvre.

During the evolutions, the courtesy of a Russian General enabled me to watch several attacks on dummy cavalry by batteries of horse artillery. A perfect hail of shrapnel was poured on the supposed advancing forces; after the firing was over, we went down to the plain to examine the dummy horsemen. Not a single one was left intact; every horse, or its rider, had been struck by fragments of flying shrapnel. In actual warfare, if the gunners had been as cool as they were on this occasion, the whole of the attacking squadron would have been swept out of existence.

In the Japanese campaign, though the Russian

artillery was handicapped by inferior weapons, the men behaved with remarkable heroism. Whole batteries were repeatedly devastated before the men could find the correct range, yet they still continued the unequal contest, often until not a man remained to serve the guns. Nimerovitch Dachenko, the celebrated Russian novelist and foreign correspondent, thus describes the heroic conduct of the brave fellows at the front:—

“On one of the heights the Russian artillery for the first time during the present war silenced the Japanese guns. Before concentrating on one of the chosen positions at Haicheng the Russians challenged the Japanese to fight. A hill that had been previously fortified was left free. The Japanese, thinking it was occupied, for thirteen hours poured on its sandy sides a terrible hail of projectiles. At five o'clock in the morning they opened fire on the hill. For fourteen entire hours the Russian quick-firing guns worked without intermission. The contest was horrible. The spectacle was grand, even elemental. There were moments when the mountains themselves seemed to shudder on their rocky foundations. The entire valley with its numerous valleys, fields, and meadows resounded, lamented, and groaned under the hundreds of steel scourges that flew over it—the bursting shrapnels. At mid-

day two of the Japanese batteries were silenced. We could see with our field-glasses how their terrified attendants fled from the spot. Towards evening a third battery was silenced, and at sunset the Japanese ran short of ammunition. The wounded on the Russian side included General Sheshkoffsky, of the artillery, and Pachenko, the commander of a battery.

“The enemy had 24 guns in action. The glory of the day belonged to the Barnoul and Tomsk troops from Siberia, whilst the commander of the Tomsk regiment was wounded. The Siberian troops were all the time exposed to the shrapnel fire, and, having to withstand a bayonet charge, sustained the greatest losses. The eleventh regiment beat off a cavalry attack by firing volleys, whilst the remaining troops received the enemy on their bayonets. The Japanese came on to the attack singing and shouting ‘Nippon Banzai.’”

The Russian soldier is one of the worst paid in Europe; for, strictly speaking, he receives only tobacco money, and no wages. The infantry soldiers receive the astounding sum of about 9d. a month, whilst the sergeant draws about half a crown. No wonder the poor fellows sometimes commit suicide on this extravagant allowance; for, if they do not receive help from home, their four or five years’

service is a terrible tax on their fortitude. The officers and generals also are, comparatively speaking, very badly remunerated for their services, and how so many of them manage to look so neat in their grey coats and black uniforms has always been to me a mystery.

But if Russia, owing to the great number of men with the colours, is unable to pay adequate salaries to the men who defend the country, we must remember that the Government does not forget the well-conducted man, whether he be officer or private, who, after leaving the service, is generally sure of a comfortable berth in the post office, customs, railways, police, gendarmerie, and thousands of other posts at the disposal of the State. Officers and generals are made prefects, chiefs of police, governors of provinces, cities, or fortresses, or are appointed to other important positions of honour and trust. As the pay of the officers is inadequate, each officer is allowed to take several men from his regiment to act as servants. As a rule, these posts are coveted; for the *djenshiks*, as they are called, are better fed than the men in barracks, and escape a good deal of drill. So far as I have been able to observe, the *djenshiks* are well treated by the officers; but I cannot say the same of the "Generalshee" and "Captainshee" (the Madame

Generals and Madam Captains), who are so impressed with the reflected glory of their husbands' dignity that they show their own power by half worrying the poor fellows to death. But there is one consolation; not every general has a "General-shèe" to assist him in maintaining the dignity of his position.

The maintenance and cost to the crown of a Russian private generally amounts to only about £37 a year, which is not surprising, considering that he practically receives no wages.

Since the last war, the pay in some regiments has been increased; but on the whole we must admit that the remuneration a Russian soldier receives is very poor indeed compared with that of an English private. Nor has he any clubs, music-halls, billiard saloons, or the numerous recreations and amusements that are open to our own soldiers when they have a little money in their pockets. He is permitted, however, to dispose of his labour outside the army, and many of the soldiers add considerably to their wages by working at the harvest, by loading or unloading ships and barges, and by doing other heavy work when strong muscles are needed.

THE JAPANESE WAR AND ITS LESSONS

CHAPTER VI

THE JAPANESE WAR AND ITS LESSONS

IT would be unjust, and a fatal mistake, to judge the Russian Army or its resources by what happened in the Russo-Japanese War. At that time Russia was fighting a powerful, up-to-date army organised on the German model, and a first-class navy, and was engaged 6000 miles away from home. Moreover, all the time this life-and-death struggle went on, she was occupied in stamping out the revolutionary movement among her own subjects. Being forced to wage two wars simultaneously, she was compelled to keep her finest troops, the regulars and the regiments of guards, in Europe, while she employed the less efficient and unsuitable reservists, Cossacks, and Siberian irregulars, against the highly drilled ranks of the Japanese. That she met disaster is not to be wondered at; but that she was able to carry on these two conflicts, one on the shores of the Baltic, the other on the coasts of the Pacific, is indeed astonishing. Probably never before in the world's history were battles in progress at such a

distance from the sources of supply and under such disheartening difficulties. It was impossible to send the forces by sea; men, ammunition, cannon, stores, and all material, had to be conveyed across the wide expanse of Asia. Despite these obstacles, the Government managed to send about 860,000 men to Manchuria and to keep this enormous army *en route*, although the temperature frequently fell far below zero, and the permanent way was continually being destroyed by the Japanese and robber Hun-hoos, and by the revolutionists at home, who were heart and soul opposed to the war, and anxious at all costs to overthrow the existing dynasty.

Russia then had all the odds against her; now, however, the majority of the factors are in her favour. The war against the Germans is popular with almost every class, from prince to peasant, for the Germans, during the last two hundred years, have monopolised many of the best places in the administrative departments, and in various spheres of industry and commerce have succeeded in making themselves intensely disliked—even more so than they are in England. They have been, in fact, the schoolmasters of the Russian people. They have had much to do with beating them into shape, but in the process have unfortunately made a most unfavourable impression. “*Suaviter in modo, fortiter*

in re" has not been the motto of the German pedagogues, bureaucrats, merchants, and pioneers of industry in Russia; thus the people, instead of being grateful to the Germans for benefits undoubtedly obtained, are, on the contrary, exceedingly bitter against their one-time tutors. In fact, throughout the world the Germans, notwithstanding their many good qualities and virtues, seem to have evinced a talent for rousing the dislike of all among whom they reside. There also exists a deep racial hatred between the Slavonic and Germanic peoples, of the intensity of which most travellers have no real conception.

In considering the present conflict, we must remember that it is being fought not thousands of miles away in the Far East, but at Russia's very gates, and with an army backed by a people longing to pay off old scores. This being the case, Russia's chances of success are enormously greater than they were in the previous campaign, when she gave no idea of what she could accomplish in more favourable circumstances. The peasantry then had never heard of the strange, distant nation, and could not understand in the least what the war was about. Of Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and the unbelieving Turks they had some sort of notion, but they knew no more about the Japs than we do of

the inhabitants of Mars, and villagers became sorely perplexed to explain the enmity of these terrible "little yellow men." They were not particularly accurate in their ideas of the English, having been told that we "lived on an island, had many wives, and were of the same faith as the Turks"; but with the Japanese they were still farther afield. Many were the sage confabulations held in tiny hamlets and in village councils, or in the "trakters" (tea-houses), on the theme of this race so deadly to Holy Russia. Some of the wiseacres, to air their superior knowledge, gravely alleged that the little men were skilled in magical arts and witchcraft; others averred that the Japanese were monkeys, not men at all, and that they fought with the help of a dragon which breathed forth fire and flame, killing all who came near with its deadly emanations. The officers, who knew everything, had a magic word, which they had only to repeat a few times for the dragon to lose his powers and expire. Such were some of the stories spread round the villages by the credulous peasants, who later on paid a terrible price for their ignorance.

The officers in that war learnt the salutary lesson never to despise an opponent. On the outbreak of hostilities, they not only made light of their diminutive enemies, but boasted to General Koorapatkine, their commander-in-chief, that they had only to

throw up their caps and the Japanese would instantly take to flight. On hearing this braggadocio, the General ironically requested his young enthusiasts to order several hundred thousand of these wonderful caps, for he had just returned from Japan, and had come to the conclusion that they would be sorely needed! Later on, General Rennenkampf came into conflict with the yellow men, and found that they were terrible little Prussians, who did everything by rule of three, and could render an excellent account of themselves. This last war undoubtedly sobered the Russians, and although they and their allies are numerically superior to the Germans and Austrians, previous misfortunes have enlightened them, and they are now marching onward, fully conscious of the serious nature of the task before them.

Were Russia a highly organised, compact State like Germany, its people could easily overrun the rest of Europe; but the very unwieldiness of the colossal Empire is an element of weakness. Another vulnerable point is the Slavonic hatred of order and discipline, qualities which in military matters are, of course, of the first importance. The Slavs have always been inclined to anarchy, and have a contempt for what the Germans term "ordnung." But good soldiers learn from defeat, and the bitter

lessons of the Japanese War have not been lost. One of the main reasons for Russia's *débâcle* was her unreadiness for war; her antagonists were more than ready, as they had prepared secretly for the struggle during ten years. Even the very battle-fields had been marked by the painstaking Japanese with the correct distances between various points of importance duly noted, so that a smart and accurate fire could be opened immediately the guns came into action.

For months prior to the outbreak, Port Arthur, Petersburg, Cronstadt, Vladivostock, and other cities teemed with Japanese spies, disguised as cooks, barbers, merchants, agents, sellers of bric-a-brac, and so on. They had learnt their lesson well from the Germans, and even bettered their instructors. The unfortunate Russians were completely taken by surprise; as a Russian lady exclaimed to me: "They know not how to fight the terrible little yellow men—all they know is how to die!" And die the poor soldiers did, with that stoicism, bravery, and resignation so peculiar to the race.

Thousands perished even on the way to the East, worn out by fatigue and want of food, without counting the thousands killed in battle. At Laojan, the total Russian losses were 100,000, of whom 40,000 were taken prisoner. The battle of Mukden,

according to Belgian military records, was one of the most sanguinary in modern history. In the battle of Leipzig, which lasted from the 16th to the 18th of October, 1813, 460,000 men took part, and the losses in killed and wounded amounted to 92,000. In the battles round Metz, from the 16th to the 18th of August, 1870, 343,000 combatants were engaged, of whom 74,000 were put out of action. But in the great struggle of Mukden, in which Koorapatkine came to grief owing to entrusting the command to an incompetent general, 610,000 men were engaged, of whom 116,000 were killed and wounded.

Koorapatkine, in his work, endeavours to exculpate himself from the charge of incompetence. Whether he was to blame or not, we must not forget that his troops made a gallant defence, and sustained losses which few other nations could stand without complete demoralisation. As an example, I may mention that of 63 officers of the First Siberian Sharpshooters only three were left alive; of the 3000 soldiers comprising the regiment, only 150 survived. As in the present war, whole divisions were decimated by the terrible fire and onslaught of the enemy. Among the chief sufferers was the Dorpat or JuriEFF Regiment, which after this, its first encounter with the foe, had only two

officers unwounded out of 79, and only 619 privates left from its full strength of 4000 men—the usual complement of a Russian regiment.

Some of the officers so far forgot their duty as to remain in Mukden, spending their time in enjoyment while the men fought for life; for this they paid dearly later on. Mischievous and frivolous women, who had joined the army on the pretence of attending to the wounded, also had much to do with the misfortunes, for which many an innocent paid with his life. The women who had caused the officers to neglect duty were unhappily not made examples of, with disastrous results to the *morale* of the troops. In the present war there is reason to believe that women will not be permitted to play such a pernicious part, the more so as Lord Kitchener does not hold with petticoat government. The class of women who will be allowed to accompany our forces will probably be as much an honour to their sex as those of Mukden were a disgrace to it.

The soldiers were so embittered against their officers that they shot several in the heat of battle when it was difficult to know by whom the shots were fired. "We have killed many," said a veteran to me, "and we will shoot more if it occurs again!"

A Prussian officer, whilst condemning Koora-patkine, does not cease to be human; his remarks,

therefore, are particularly interesting at the present moment. "A man bowed down by misfortune, Koorapatkine now stands before us after the defeat which he suffered in his position at Mukden. In spite of the fact that the position was quite unsuitable he stuck to it with fatal obstinacy to the last minute. It is only due to the brilliant military genius of Linevitch ¹ that Russia has at the present moment any army at all in the Far East; this will form the nucleus of a new army *if the Japanese give their opponents sufficient time*. But to what extent shall we acquit Koorapatkine of blame? I think that this all depends on the degree to which he was allowed freedom of action. I am personally of opinion that at Mukden, as well as at Laojan, Koorapatkine acted under pressure from St. Petersburg. It is almost confirmed that after Laojan the defence of Mukden was imposed upon him as a duty in order that the loss of the old Manchurian capital should not damage Russian prestige. From the reports and data ² to hand concerning the battle of Mukden, it is evident that he was the victim of a fatal interference. On the 22nd of February the Commander-in-Chief gave the or-

¹ Linevitch: "The old grey wolf of Manchuria," as the soldiers lovingly called him, did form a new army.

² "Frankfurter Zeitung."

der to send heavy cannon to Tieling, thus showing that he considered it impossible to hold his position; but instead of returning with his entire army after the artillery he remained two days in his old position, thus giving the enemy an opportunity of uniting forces and inflicting punishment on the right and left flanks by means of a turning movement. This caused the Russians terrible losses on the western flank whilst retreating to Tieling. How shall we explain this delay? If it did not take place through interference from St. Petersburg, then we may reasonably suppose that Koorapatkine lost his head; but this I consider completely impossible, the more so because the Commander-in-Chief, at the very last moment, instituted a counter-attack against the Japanese left flank, thus risking being taken prisoner. Such a bold step could not be taken by a man who had lost his head. I am therefore of the opinion that events did not happen in this manner without instructions from St. Petersburg. Of course, we should know the truth about everything if the diary of Koorapatkine appeared in the Press, but in every case the responsibility falls entirely upon those who insisted upon his preserving the positions at Mukden."

We must also remember that Koorapatkine was

not allowed to carry out his own plan of campaign, but was sent to relieve Port Arthur, although that was an impossibility, owing to its being so strongly invested. Just as the Russian fleet was sacrificed at Tchushima to appease popular clamour for action, Koorapatkine was forced into attempting what was impossible.

Another cause of much fatal blundering was the want of maps. When the war began, Russian troops had to enter Manchuria without these absolutely necessary details of a campaign in a strange country. Complaints were immediately made to St. Petersburg about this oversight, and General Poniaffsky predicted that this negligence would spell disaster. The General's fears proved only too true, and many a valuable life was lost unnecessarily, especially during the artillery contests, which were carried on by the Russian gunners ignorant of the actual range and with inferior ordnance.

On the other hand, the opponents had splendid maps. Each soldier was supplied with one on which probable battle grounds were carefully marked, and even the range between the different points accurately calculated. This foresight was invaluable, for when the fighting opened at Laojan, the Yalu, and other places time was not wasted in finding the range; it was there in plain figures before their eyes.

But all these disadvantages and terrible losses did not discourage the Russians. Had they been allowed to continue the campaign with the brave old Linevitch, who had encamped at Tieling with a fresh army, composed of guards and regulars, Russia would probably have won in this struggle against the Japs, just as she did in the long contest with Napoleon.

An unknown historian has pointed out with truth that Russia, during the whole course of her history, has hardly ever waged a war quicker or finished one with such a success as the Franco-Prussian War. During the reign of Peter the Great, she began the Northern War disastrously at Narva. Yet, although signally defeated by a vastly inferior force of Swedes, she continued for twenty-one years and did not finish until she was completely victorious, and Sweden was utterly exhausted.

With Napoleon the Russians carried on war for ten years, beginning by their crushing defeat at Austerlitz and terminating with the capture of Paris and the downfall of Napoleon. In 1878 they suffered three defeats at Plevna, but thanks to the guards and the regular troops, which were not used in the Japanese struggle, they were finally victorious and were able to sign a treaty of peace at Constantinople. Russia has always paid very dearly

in the beginning of a campaign for her unreadiness, but in the end she has won, thanks to her extraordinary obstinacy in carrying on a losing war and her power to suffer amazing loss of life and property without losing heart. That the average Russian is a fatalist like the Turk, and that he considers that everything that happens, good and bad, as the will of God, is an immense help and source of comfort to him when surrounded by enemies and discouraged by defeat.

The remarkable quality of Russian endurance was also shown at Borodino, where the troops, although attacked by the finest forces of Napoleon, held their ground with such tenacity that Napoleon had to confess that a few more such victories of this Pyrrhic character would mean his complete undoing. In the sanguinary struggle which is graphically described in Tolstoi's "Peace and War" the Russians lost 38,000 men out of a total force of 110,000.¹ In the defence of Sevastopol, which held out for over a year, it is estimated that their losses were not fewer than 100,000 men. In all their campaigns we see the same indomitable spirit in the

¹ Note on the Battle of Borodino: La perte fut excessive de part et d'autre; elle peut être évaluée à 28,000 française et 50,000 Russes. (Campagne de Russie en 1812, par M. Le Duc de Fezensac.)

grey-coated soldiers, who know how to die on the field of battle, even if they do not always know how to conquer. It is this self-sacrificing spirit more than anything else that has been the making of the empire: the willingness to die for an idea, whether it be for the Tsar, the Orthodox Church or the country. We see the same spirit in the revolutionists: a readiness to offer everything, even life itself, for an idea on which they choose to set their minds. This capacity to suffer for an ideal is peculiarly Russian, and in the near future is sure to have a great influence on the destinies of Europe.

One of our greatest ambassadors, Sir Robert Morier, once publicly thanked God for giving the Russian people kind hearts. Let us hope that his estimate of them will prove true of their soldiers; for the fate of Europe depends largely upon the simple *moujik*.

THE COSSACKS

CHAPTER VII

THE COSSACKS

THE Cossacks undoubtedly are the most noted soldiers of the Russian Army. This enormous living rampart protects the frontiers of Russia from the shores of the Don to the Pacific Ocean; all through the enormous stretch of territory of South Russia, the Caucasus, Persia, Turkestan, Siberia and along the distant shores of the Pacific will always be found the Cossack, ever on the alert, looking after the interests of his "Little Mother" (Holy Russia), as he calls her.

In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Cossacks had their own states or republics and were governed by a Hetman or military governor elected by the people. Their principal settlements were on the banks of the Don and the Donetz, where they formed a series of powerful independent groups, organised on the most democratic basis possible. Their whole form of government was very similar to that of the ancient and famous republics of Novgorod the Great, Tver, Pskoff,

Yaroslaſſ and Suzdal. They spent most of their time in freebooting or in waging war against other states around them. Many times it was against the "infidel" Crimean Tartars (Basurmen), whom it was actually a virtue to kill and plunder; at others the cruel Poles (the Catholics) were the objects of their raids, while the autocratic Grand Duchy of Muscovy and the Turks also knew what it was to encounter these terrible warriors. Sometimes, however, they would join with the Turks and fight the Muscovites, or, if the pay was good and there were chances of plenty of plunder they have been known to throw in their lot with the Tartars. In fact, so long as there was stirring adventure to be had and good booty to be gained the true Cossack of the past did not particularly mind with whom he fought, or against whom he turned his arms.

In the days of their greatest power it is said that they could muster about 300,000 horsemen, the majority of whom were free men and freeholders. Our old English yeomen who turned out in their thousands to assist John Hampden and the Parliament at a moment's notice are the nearest approach I know to the Cossacks, who might also be compared to the freebooters of the border.

The Cossacks at last became so powerful, that it was necessary for the Government of Muscovy to

undertake a series of energetic wars against them, during which their celebrated leaders, Stenker-Rjazin, Pugacheff and others fought furiously in trying to overthrow the "hated goats,"¹ as they called the Muscovites. More than once they very nearly succeeded in defeating their assailants, and thus upsetting the whole state and fabric of Russia. "Land, Liberty and the Old Faith" was their motto, and with this cry they assembled in their thousands and tens of thousands on the banks of the Volga and compelled Catherine II more than once to send the Imperial Russian army against them. Often the Russians were defeated, until at last, one after another, the Cossack leaders were betrayed and brought to Moscow, where they were usually hanged, drawn and quartered; thus, little by little, the Cossack power was broken.

For a long time, however, these warriors remained so troublesome that the Muscovite Government thought it wise to unite them peacefully with Holy Russia under their Hetman, Bogdan Chlemetsky, thereby using their wonderful bravery and energy for the expansion and defence of the Russian Empire, Ermak, a Cossack freebooter of Avar origin, born at Ermakova on the lower Volga, was

¹ So called because they wore long beards, while the Cossacks wore large drooping moustaches.

one of the first to offer his services to the Muscovites. In order to propitiate Ivan the Terrible he presented to him the enormous continent of Siberia, which he, with a handful of daredevils, had wrested from the fierce Tartars and Mongols in the days of Good Queen Bess. Probably never in the world's history has such an expanse of country been conquered by so few invaders. The place is still shown where Ermak rode his horse into the blue waters of the Pacific. It was a long ride—about 5000 miles—from the Volga to the Pacific, but this distance was not considered too much for a Cossack. The writer himself knew Nicholas Pjeskoff, a Cossack officer, who rode all the way from Blagoveshchensk on the Amur to the Baltic on a small Cossack pony, a distance of 6000 miles. All St. Petersburg was anxious to see this little man; for Pjeskoff was of small stature, and in the depth of the Arctic winter had braved the snow-drifts of Siberia, the merciless steppes and the Taiga when the temperature was frequently 30 and 40 degrees below zero.

In order to show my appreciation and admiration for this modern representative of Ermak or Taras Bulba, whose exploit Gogol has immortalised, I passed a night in the open near Looga with Tom Stevens, the celebrated and plucky correspondent of the "New York World," who travelled the wilds of

Africa for his paper in search of the great explorer Stanley, who had disappeared into the forest depths of the Dark Continent.

The women, as well as the men, are first-class riders—veritable Amazons like their Scythian and Sarmatian ancestors.

It would take too long to describe the wonderful deeds which have been accomplished by these men from time to time. Volumes might be written of the feats accomplished under Ermak, their fearless, hardy leader—deeds rivalling in interest those related by Fenimore Cooper of the Indians. However, I have said quite enough to show of what metal the Cossacks are made, and what they can accomplish when called upon. In the last war they were of incalculable value in keeping open and defending the long line of communication in the Far East. In fact, they were so useful that had it not been for them, the war with the Japanese could never have been waged at all. It was the Cossacks who guarded the East Siberian and Manchurian railways, a distance of 2000 miles. They prevented the line from being blown up by the Japanese and the Hun-hoos, as the Mongolian bandits are called in the Far East.

Of all the Cossacks, the Siberian Cossack is probably the hardest and strongest. Many of these are

veritable giants in comparison with the dwellers in the towns, and are of enormous strength. Some of them are descendants of the very Cossacks who in the days of Elizabeth followed Ermak through Siberia, never halting until they had reached the shores of the Pacific. During the wars of Napoleon the Cossacks played a great part, contributing more than any other body of men to the cutting up and destroying of the army of the great general, especially in the disastrous retreat from Moscow. It was the Cossacks who converted the retreat into a rout by cutting off all stragglers, attacking the weary soldiers night and day, never giving them time to rest or to regain their scattered battalions. Had it not been for the Cossacks a considerable portion of the French army eventually would have got back to France, but with this ubiquitous and restless body of cavalry worrying and alarming the unfortunate soldiers it was impossible.

What rôle the Cossack is going to play in the present great war is still uncertain, but it will no doubt be a very momentous one, especially if the Germans, or rather Prussians, are put to flight. The terror inspired by the campaigns of 1812, 1813, 1814 still lives in East Prussia, through which some thousands of these wild horsemen, accompanied by

hordes of "Khirgise" bowmen, marched to Paris. The atrocities then committed by Cossacks and not by modern Prussians are still remembered. If I am not mistaken the wild, savage spirit still lives in many of them, especially in those from the Caucasus and the Asiatic provinces. If these men are not controlled by their officers they will commit fearful acts of vandalism on the Germans, who will thus be paid back in their own coin for the shameful way they have treated defenceless Belgians with whom they had no quarrel. An officer of the General Staff told the writer a few years ago that the Cossacks, for some reason or other, are much incensed against the Prussians, and that he had himself heard a Cossack officer urge his men not to spare the Prussians but to slaughter them all—men, women, and children—when they entered the country. This they will probably do unless held in check, so bitter is their hatred of the "Prussakee."

But we must remember that all Cossacks are not the same either with regard to race or character; there are many different types of varying character, appearance and tradition. There are 185,000 Don Cossacks, Kuban Cossacks, Terek Cossacks, Astrachan Cossacks, Ural Cossacks, Orenburg Cossacks, Trans-Baikal Cossacks, Amour Cossacks and many others too numerous to mention here. Not all are

of the Stenker-Rjazin and Taras Bulba type; they slaughtered everyone they came across without mercy. Some of the kindest men who ever lived have been Cossacks and also some of the most cruel.

Since the last Turkish war the number of Cossack regiments have been increased, and it is alleged that the total number that Russia has under her standard to-day is 185,000 men; most of these are freeholders or small farmers who supply their own horses, uniform and accoutrements. They possess many valuable privileges, the remains of their former power; they have much greater political and civil freedom than the ordinary Russian citizen who since the destruction of the old free republic of Northern Russia and the invasion of the Tartars has never known what true freedom is, such as is enjoyed by the English, the Scandinavians, the French, the Dutch and the Belgians. Since the Boer War the Cossacks have been converted into mounted infantry, but it is not yet known whether the innovation is of much practical use. The Cossack is generally taken to be a mounted soldier, but there are regiments which also consist of infantry and artillery. Generally attached to bodies of infantry, they are used for scouting, foraging, keeping up lines of communication and protecting the flanks of an army from sudden attack. They are

divided into hundreds, like the old Romans, and commanded by an officer corresponding to the Roman centurion. Their military organisation is quite distinct and original and bears traces of Scandinavian, Tartar and perhaps even of Byzantine influence.

One of the most remarkable and interesting periods of the writer's life was spent among these people in the peaceful and beautiful Ukraine (Little Russia), where so many of them dwell. The Ukraine is truly a land flowing with milk and honey. Here everything grows in abundance; wheat, maize, sunflowers, buckwheat, tobacco, grapes, melons and every variety of fruit. No wonder then that there is a merry side to the fierce, rough Cossacks when they have been reared and nurtured in such a rich and verdant country. In their beautiful songs, dances and choruses they show that they know how to appreciate the beautiful and are full of the joy of life, when not engaged in war which, unfortunately, brings out the latent barbaric nature in them.

What can be more plaintive and beautiful than their songs, some of which resemble the old English madrigals? No people in Europe have more beautiful folk songs than the Cossacks. The only people who can in any way approach them in this respect are the Welsh and perhaps some of the Scandi-

navian races. The true Cossack is nearly always singing; when not singing he is frequently dancing. He must somehow or other get rid of his exuberant vitality. His dancing is not awkward and violent like that of many of the Great Russians; it is full of grace, poetry and harmony, probably owing to the refining influence of the Poles, who for a time ruled the Cossacks with a rod of iron.

Notwithstanding the fact that they are such splendid horsemen and can perform feats which would turn a cow-boy green with envy, they are far too lightly mounted to be used against heavy cavalry. The weight of man and horse of a modern squadron of heavy cavalry would ride down an equal number of Cossacks, mounted on their light but nimble horses. But they still have their uses in war, and if, during the present struggle, they perform but a tithe of the valiant deeds they have accomplished in former wars they will make an impression on Germany which will not soon be forgotten.

THE COSSACKS IN MODERN TIMES:
AND A COSSACK AMAZON NOW AT
THE FRONT

CHAPTER VIII

THE COSSACKS IN MODERN TIMES: AND A COSSACK AMAZON NOW AT THE FRONT

MY first acquaintance with the Cossacks was during the reign of Alexander III, when a large force of these irregulars performed a series of military evolutions in the great square of the Kremlin at Moscow. The feats of horsemanship common among them are rarely excelled in any other country. These wild riders shot well in every imaginable position—some hanging below the belly of their steeds, others standing upright in the saddle, in all the exercises showing equal smartness and skill. The most surprising feat represented the carrying away of a woman by a Cossack on horseback, while standing in his saddle. The men seem to live on horseback, and to be a part of the animals that carry them, like the fabled centaurs of the Greeks.

The second occasion on which I came into contact with this branch of the Russian Army was

when near Lubotin, on one of the estates of Prince Svajatopock Mirsky, the Hetman of the Don Cossacks. Both of the Hetman's two sturdy sons were Cossacks, although they were highly educated and belonged to one of Russia's most noble families. It was owing to a member of this family that Russia was for a short time granted a constitution and representative government. The father himself was a descendant of Svjatopock, the Grand Duke who murdered his brother and who for that reason was called "the accursed." He was extremely handsome, with a long white beard, resembling Edward III, or some old Viking earl.

Although his family had been in the country for a thousand years, he still suggested the viking type. His wife, a beautiful, accomplished lady whom I shall ever remember with pleasure, showed me round the picture-gallery, which contained many valuable works of the old masters. Her sons informed me that they each had over 1500 acres of the communal land as their birthright, owing to the fact that they were born free Cossacks.

Later on, in the Kuban district of the Northern Caucasus, I came to know others of this denomination, who were very wealthy; some of the Kuban Cossacks, in fact, owned one or two thousand acres of the very finest land in Europe, which they

farmed, or rented to the Greeks, who raised here tobacco equal to the best Turkish. These soldiers are exceedingly handsome, and dead shots. They are such splendid horsemen that with the Cossacks of the Terek they are usually selected for the Tsar's own bodyguard, and are known as the Imperial Convoy, trusted to the last, and accompanying the Tsar in his travels whenever possible. Their erect carriage and fine appearance is said to be due to the fact that their ancestors, during the forty years they were fighting the brave Caucasians, used to run off and marry all the most beautiful Caucasian women they could find. This struggle was so long and bitter that in the Kuban province almost every acre has been drenched with blood.

The last time I met the Cossacks the meeting was very close indeed. I was in St. Petersburg, and there were serious riots in the Kazan Square. The Don Cossacks, called out in haste, rode down the students, labourers, and other demonstrators like a living avalanche; they appeared to spring from nowhere. In an instant, almost before I was aware of them, they were charging the crowd, striking right and left with their terrible loaded whips that cut and tear the flesh almost like a sword. Never shall I forget that scene; many men and young women were trampled under the feet of the horses.

During the manœuvres at Krasno Selo, on one occasion I narrowly escaped being ridden down by about three thousand of these dare-devil horsemen. In peace they are terrible enough; in war, they are wellnigh irresistible, rushing like a whirlwind on the scattering enemy. Nothing can withstand them; men and horses fall like ripe corn under their long lances and the curved sabres which they wield with such awful skill. An idea of what they can accomplish with these two favourite weapons may be obtained from the thrilling tale "Taras Bulba," by Gogol, the famous Cossack author. These form the formidable enemy which Austrians and Prussians have to meet on the eastern frontiers. Should they once succeed in breaking through, they will be in Berlin and Vienna, in all probability, almost as soon as this little work sees the light.

The Cossacks are of two great kinds, Stanovia and Caucasian. The latter are attired in close-fitting "tcherkeske" or long gowns, and armed with small-bore magazine rifles, weighing nine pounds (Russian), a curved sword, and a double-edged dagger. All other Cossacks are dressed in a long surtout without buttons, and armed with a similar rifle, a curved sword and a long lance. Old-fashioned pictures of the Crimean War often show these warriors. Their horses are Siberian or

Khirgise, certainly not much as regards appearance, but as hardy and enduring as their riders. A peculiar saddle is used, on which are placed two cushions; when on the march these are employed as a bag for their linen and various trifles.

Hardened by constant exposure, face to face with wild and lonely aspects of nature, the Siberian Cossacks have acquired a sombre and melancholy character. The majority of them are Old Believers, i.e. they keep to the rites and observances as practised by the Orthodox Church before its reform by the patriarch Nikon. For this they were formerly much persecuted; but latterly they have been allowed to retain their own peculiar views unmolested.

In times of peace these regiments guard the Siberian frontiers against savage nomadic tribes. When not engaged thus, they busy themselves with agricultural pursuits. Every soldier is obliged to serve, and the practice of drawing lots, which obtains with other portions of the population, does not exist among them. On attaining the age of eighteen, a Cossack is bound to join the preparatory category of the army, in which he must remain for three years; during this period, he is classed as under-aged, and in the first year he must procure at his own cost a horse, uniform, and arms. In

the second and third years the young soldier is taught to ride, to shoot, to drill, and in winter he is occupied in learning to read, and in mastering the military regulations.

At the age of twenty-one the young Cossacks are entered for service in the field regiments of the first order, in which they serve four years. After the expiration of this term they are granted leave of absence for four years, being then considered as belonging to regiments of the second order. In this time of comparative rest they are expected to keep uniforms and horses in good condition, and every spring to undergo a month of military training. Thanks to this system, at from twenty-five to thirty years of age they are experienced, and well acquainted with military demands, ready to serve their country at a moment's notice.

After four years with the troops of the second order, the Cossack is entered again for service in regiments of the third order; while here, he is only expected to furnish uniform and arms; his horse, which costs about £4 or £5 in South Russia, must be forthcoming when he is called up for active service. Completing this term, he is classed among the reserves; of these there are a great many, probably equal in number to their confrères in harness. Five years in the Reserves brings him the status

of the "Opolchina," a division corresponding to the German Landsturm. Of these there are over four millions in Russia. It will be seen that a Cossack actually serves his country for twenty years, ever ready with horse, sword, rifle, and lance to fight for the Tsar, the country, and the true faith. Since the Turkish War, a considerable number of Cossacks have been trained in the same manner as the regular army, and thanks to this superior process a great part of what was once a purely irregular force may now be regarded as regular mounted infantry. Their great use was signally exemplified in the fighting round Tientsin and in Manchuria, where they proved of inestimable value.

In stature and strength, the Siberian Cossacks and regulars are almost giants in comparison with their European comrades; but, with all their bravery and hardihood, they are more fit to cope with Tartars, Turcomans, and savage races than with the differently trained forces of western Europe.

If we evince enthusiasm for a Cossack to whom riding is more natural than walking, what measure of praise should be awarded to the "Kazatchka" (Cossack woman), Mme. A. Koodesheva, who arrived in St. Petersburg, after a ride of 12,000 versts (6000 miles), from Harbin, in Northern Manchuria, where they proved of inestimable value.

forests, infested with wild animals, fugitive outlaws, and convicts, at war with man and society.

Mme. Koodesheva is a widow of the former commander of the Orenburg Cossacks. As the wife of a Cossack, she has probably been at home in the saddle from her earliest years; for among her hardy race the very children are able to ride almost as soon as they can walk. Her wonderful ride, which outrivals the feats of Dick Turpin, Paul Revere, Captain Burnaby, Nicholas Pjeskoff, and all the other heroes of the saddle, is described by her as follows:—

“On May 2 I set out for Harbin by the old Moscow-Siberian road (‘Sibersky Tract’), taking the route along the line, which was occupied by the Siberian frontier guard. My horse, ‘Mongolek,’ was quite untamed, and had only been once under the saddle previously. She carried in all a weight of about four poods (144 lb.), which included myself and my impedimenta. My only other companion was ‘Faraf,’ my St. Bernard, but I was obliged to leave him behind in Tchita, as it was impossible to feed him, food being so scarce.

“In Manchuria heavy rains had fallen, and in many places the roads had been completely spoilt, which made riding exceedingly difficult.

“The further I went the worse it got; the road

was entirely ruined, and it was nothing but bog and taiga (primeval forest) for days on end. The worst, however, was to follow, for between the stations of Soodshánsk and Bolotnoi, on the great Siberian highway, I was obliged to ride all alone, a distance of thirty miles through the forest paths made by the 'Brodjagee.'¹ It is true I had with me a revolver and a dagger. Once I met some vagabonds, who accosted me, saying, 'Lady, lady! God will reward you for your labours, but give us only some tobacco!'

"I thereupon threw them some cigarettes, but at the same time kept them at a distance. From Bolotnoi to the village of Koostel, a distance of twelve miles, I was forced to take guides. Had I not done so it would have been impossible to proceed, as my route lay through the most awful marsh and bog conceivable. How I ever got through I do not even know to this day!

"Between Tchita and Verchnioodinsk I crossed the Yablonsk mountain range. Here and there were to be seen the rotting mile posts, indicating the remains of the high road, but all around there was not a vestige of any human habitation. Now and then I happened to come across old men and women,

¹ Brodjagee, the vagrants, exiles, murderers, and convicts who have escaped into the forests, where they are frequently a source of great danger to travellers.

who had formerly been employed to watch the road.

“I had, however, the good fortune to come across a whole caravan, or party of travellers, in the very wilds of Siberia. I was lying outstretched on the ground alongside my horse, when suddenly I seemed to hear a voice in my sleep:—

“‘Ah, what a nice little horse and a lady in a Caucasian coat and a sheepskin hat!’

“I glanced around, and beheld, to my surprise, a lot of monks with crosses on their chests. They were travelling to the diocese of the local archbishop, accompanied by six policemen, and the clerks of the chancellery. The meeting could not possibly have been more opportune, for they were able to feed me for several days with milk, eggs, and even white bread!

“I must confess that at the beginning of my journey the question of the commissariat did not worry me; for there was no difficulty in obtaining from the Booryats (of Eastern Siberia) every kind of edible, including meat. But, later on, I fared badly, especially among the Russians: they feed the whole year round on rye bread and tea. They drink brick tea, and stew it in large pots. Eggs are exceedingly dear, and cost 7, 8, 9, and 10 copecks each (2d.). The reason for the high price is to be found in the

fact that there are a great many agents buying them up for the English exporting firms, also because the natives steal the eggs and sell them to the English at a good price.

“Starting from the Government of Tobolsk all the people seem to be very noisy and loquacious, and at the same time they are also more impudent and avaricious.

“On July 1 I was already in Irkutsk, and on August 25 was at Krasnoyark. Here I remained some days. The weather suddenly changed. It rained and snowed incessantly.

“On October 1 I arrived at Omsk, having ridden 4000 miles. I remained in Omsk twenty days, and at the request of the military governor set out again through the Cossack settlements of the second division of the Siberian Cossack forces. The officers and the Cossacks greeted my arrival among them with ecstasy.

“On January 6 I arrived at Tchelabinsk.

“Towards the end of January I crossed the Urals. I was, however, compelled to remain a short time at the Satkin Crown Ironworks, as the cold was 60 degrees below zero. Every one was astonished how I went without mittens, or my ‘bashalik’ (Caucasian hood). But, first and foremost, I thought of my horse.

"In March I saw Kazan, and Nishni Novgorod in April. But on April 29, on my birthday, and the day of my Angel (name's day), a great misfortune befell me! At Gorocovetz in the Government of Vladimir, the President of the Local Circuit Court came out to meet me. His velocipede frightened my horse and hurt its leg. I then was obliged to attend the animal ten days without a veterinary surgeon.

"In Moscow I was met by the officers of the 185th Don Cossack Regiment. I had scarcely arrived in the town when I saw crowds of people, attracted by the experiments in aviation. One of the crowd, a young man, on seeing me, exclaimed:

"'Surely we have enough Cossack hangmen without having "Kazatchkee" (women Cossacks) also.'

"I lost my patience, and struck him with my nagaika.¹ The incident passed as if nothing had happened.

"From Moscow I travelled by short stages. At Klin I passed many automobilists racing, whilst at Kretscach I first saw the aeroplanes flying; further on, at Valdai, in the Valdai Hills, the military automobiles were racing and manœuvring.

¹"Nagaika," a Cossack whip, which, weighted with a bullet, is a terrible weapon, and cuts like a sword.

"I was obliged to wait three whole days, because I did not care to take the risk of having my horse frightened and lamed. Notwithstanding the fact she had carried me more than 12,000 versts¹ in fifteen months, she was not quite accustomed to mankind. . . . Only the other day one of the Cossacks endeavoured to mount her, when she gave him a nasty fall.

"See how I take care of 'Mongolek,' " the brave "Kazatchka" exclaimed when talking about the virtues of her trusty companion. "Look at her back! It is quite straight, and the hair is even not worn off, although she has carried me 12,000 versts! 'Mongolek' is of pure Mongolian breed: light grey in colour, and eight years old.

"You ask me what is the object of my journey? My main object is to prove to the Tsar the loyalty of the Cossack women. He not only requires Cossacks, but 'Kazatchkee' (women Cossacks), who will always be ready to join in the defence of the fatherland. I have received permission, by the way, to present 'Mongolek' to the Tsarevitch, and I was desirous of proving the lasting importance of cavalry in general."

¹One verst equals about two-thirds of an English mile.

Note on Cossacks.—The word *Kazaks* originally meant a free-booter and is of very ancient origin. The Cos-

sacks are a very mixed race, and are of Tartar, Turk, Caucasian, Slavonic, and even Gothic origin. Their present military organisation dates from Peter the Great. "Once a Cossack always a Cossack." No matter how old a Cossack is, he belongs to the reserve forces of the "National Defence," and, if required, accompanies his sons and grandchildren to battle.

THE DISPOSITION OF THE TROOPS, AND
THE REALISM OF THE MANŒUVRES

CHAPTER IX

THE DISPOSITION OF THE TROOPS, AND THE REALISM OF THE MANŒUVRES

THIS enormous army, variously estimated as numbering from five to six million of men, is not stationed, we must remember, solely in the European area. There are, as I have already said, forty or fifty thousand Frontier Guards, who are permanently on the Austrian, German, Armenian, Persian, Roumanian, and other boundaries, with instructions to keep out smugglers, and to prevent unauthorised persons without passports from crossing the border.

Behind the Frontier Guards are the various Army Corps, stationed in the different military circuits of Kieff, Warsaw, Moscow, Petersburg, Riga, Revel, and Finland. An army corps usually contains from two to three hundred thousand men; the one at St. Petersburg comprises the Guards, the flower of the forces. There are generally three corps stationed in the Caucasus, and four cavalry divisions, without counting the Kuban Cossacks. Another 150,000 are

maintained in Central Asia, and a considerable force holds the Japanese and Chinese frontiers.

If the reports can be credited, there are about a million troops in Finland at the present time, as it was feared that the Germans, after seizing the Aland Isles, would endeavour to march on St. Petersburg through the Grand Duchy. Owing to the failure of the projected campaign in East Prussia, this plan has probably fallen through. It is hardly to be doubted that an attack on Finland was contemplated, for the great manœuvres in that country, which I attended for several summers in succession, were specially arranged in view of a supposed attack on the Grand Duchy by the Germans. The evolutions were carried through with such intense realism that infantry soldiers were found dead in the forests round my brother's estate. The commissariat waggons, owing to the rapid forced marches, could not keep pace with the troops; with the result that many men succumbed, completely worn out by heat, hunger, and exhaustion. Had it not been for the hospitality shown to these unfortunates by English residents, some of whom have villas in Finland, many more would undoubtedly have perished. I give this little incident simply to show with what rigid reality the Army's manœuvres are carried out.

In the capital, and in centres such as Lodz and Warsaw, where there are huge industrial populations and often numbers of disaffected inhabitants, large bodies of troops have necessarily to be quartered.

The need for keeping so many divisions in Finland, the Baltic Provinces, Odessa, Central Asia, Manchuria, and many other danger-spots, with the object of maintaining order among the native people and of guarding against revolutionary outbreaks, considerably diminishes the fighting strength of the Army as a whole. In the Japanese War so many men were left at home for this purpose that Russia practically lost the day through sheer inability to utilise the tremendous military powers which she undoubtedly possesses.

The manœuvres of the Army generally take place every summer and are carried out on a scale unknown in England. Every year the Guards manœuvre around Petrograd and Tsarkoe Selo, but at times the operations of this and other crack regiments extend the whole distance between the capital and the ancient fortress of Narva, the scene of the victory of Charles XII over the Russian Army. These grand evolutions, which I often visited, were carried on with at least 200,000 men—100,000 on each side. The Tsar and the Grand Dukes usually

attend and inspire the troops under their command. The conditions are made to resemble those of actual warfare as nearly as possible. Cavalry swim through deep rivers, and divisions of the infantry also, with the result that many an unfortunate soldier is drowned or expires from exhaustion. The Grand Dukes follow on horseback; though reared in luxury, they have frequently to undergo the fatigue and strain of the ordinary soldier.

Exceedingly important tests have also been carried out at Koorsk in South Russia, on a scale equal in magnitude to those already referred to. The operations I witnessed in Narva covered an extent of territory equal to the combined area of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Finnish manœuvres were also extremely realistic.

For many years the Russian troops have been executing a series of manœuvres in those parts of the Empire which were liable to be invaded. We need not be surprised, therefore, if the German armies endeavour to invade Finland or the Baltic provinces; the Russians have long been ready for such a contingency.

The greatest manœuvres I ever saw took place between Krasno Selo and Narva. About 200,000 men were present on this occasion. Half of them were supposed to be Germans or a foreign army

endeavouring to march on Petrograd ; the other half represented the force of defence. The Emperor and Grand Dukes took an active part in these operations, which lasted several weeks. Owing to the courtesy of the military authorities, I and several other correspondents were furnished with passes and permitted to watch the operations at close quarters. The Grand Dukes, especially the Grand Duke Nicholas, the elder (father of the present Grand Duke), took a lively interest in the proceedings. Later on I witnessed the manœuvres in Finland, at which the Tsar was present.

The Finnish troops, which have since been disbanded, took a prominent part in the Wilhelmstrand manœuvres, and won the admiration of an old colonel who was with me. But these troops were not popular with the Russian regiments of the Guard, and had they not been disbanded it is quite possible that blood would have flowed on both sides long before this. The Finnish people, as we have seen, no longer support their own military, which during the 'Thirty Years' War with Germany played such a glorious part, proving so hardy and brave that they were generally used for forlorn hopes or when no other troops would carry out desperate assaults and charges. During these interesting operations, carried on with all the grim realism of war, a por-

tion of the forces occupied Pskoff, once the capital of one of the most powerful republics in Russia, but now a sleepy provincial town. Here an officer of the gendarmes wanted to arrest me, for he could not understand what I, an Englishman, had to do with Russian manœuvres. (The English were then very unpopular in Russia.) Judging from the questions he put to me he was not conscious of the importance of the English Press, which I then represented.

The famous Preolrashensk regiment, founded by Peter the Great, and the artillery of the Guards, with other regiments, numbering about 60,000 men, paraded before the Tsar and the Grand Dukes. It was a brilliant spectacle as thousands of these fine stalwart men, the pick of the Empire, passed before their "Little Father" and the members of the staff who stood around him. Pskoff was simply packed with military; there were about two soldiers to every civilian. Never since the day when the brave inhabitants endured a three months' siege by the forces of Stephan Batroi had this once famous city seen such a concourse of fighting men. When we remember that the King of Poland had 150,000 men with him and could not with all this force take the town, we can form an idea of the strength of this ancient republic, the sister of Novgorod the

Great, "My Lord Novgorod." Gustavus Adolphus, with his brave army of Swedes who defeated Tilly and Wallenstein, had no better luck, and was forced to retire from the battered walls. Now Tilly, Wallenstein and the chivalrous Gustavus are no more; but Pskoff still stands, a shadow and wreck of its former might and glory. The city is full of ancient churches and monasteries, dating from the days when Varangian (Viking) Grand Dukes ruled over Russia, but in these pages this time must be passed over in silence.

What particularly impressed me throughout the manœuvres was the great interest the Tsar and the Grand Dukes took in military matters. They did not spare themselves in the least, several of them undergoing all the hardships, trouble and toil of a simple officer. Finest of all, perhaps, was the old Grand Duke Michael, the son of the Tsar Nicholas. When last I saw him, although he was over seventy years of age, he marched at the head of his regiment of artillery, equal in every way to a much younger man. Like the iron emperor, Nicholas, he delighted in the rough life of a soldier. His food, during the manœuvres, was of the simplest, and he slept in a rough iron bedstead that many a private would not care to rest in. He was considered one of the wealthiest men in Europe, and,

although his estates in Russia occupied the space of many English counties, he evidently was only too delighted to escape from the pomp and luxury of his exalted position and to rough it once more with the men, who almost worshipped the ground he trod upon. He was not only head of all the Orders of the Russian Empire, but also of all the Russian artillery, which then numbered 6000 pieces. After witnessing the performances of his gunners he used to call up the soldiers and distribute new silver roubles and silver watches, which were greatly prized—"for had not the Grand Duke presented them with his own hands?"

The Grand Duke Vladimir, the Tsar's uncle, was equally in evidence. Although he was very handsome, and brave to temerity, he was not so popular with his officers and men as the veteran Grand Duke, who took such a prominent part in the campaign in Asia Minor during the last Russo-Turkish War.

There was also the Grand Duke Paul, then Commander of the Guard, tall and erect as a pine-tree; the affable and cultivated Duke Constantine, President of the Academy of Sciences; but the space and time at my disposal do not permit me to describe all these eminent personages in detail.

Each day, after all the manœuvres, parades and

marches were over, there was a grand religious and military ceremony called the "Objezd Lager," or ride round the camp—which was sometimes several miles in circumference. The troops were without side-arms on these occasions.

After inspecting the various regiments, the Tsar received the reports of his officers. Then, at a given signal, about five hundred cannon were fired simultaneously, while a thousand musicians and drummers struck up the "Koln Slavjan," a Russian national hymn. All the military present, from the Emperor to the humblest private soldier, then intoned the Lord's Prayer. The effect of this ceremony was impressive beyond words. Anyone who wishes to see it to perfection must visit the camp at Tsarskoe Selo, for naturally when the Tsar and the Grand Dukes are present it is far more striking than on ordinary occasions.

After watching the manœuvres at Krasno, the scene of operations was transferred to the Finnish coast, opposite Cronstadt. This was after the opposing forces had come into contact outside Krasno, where the great mock battle was fought which was to decide the fate of St. Petersburg. As might be anticipated, the invading army was driven back after a stubborn contest, thanks to the prowess of the Imperial Guards, the flower of the army. While this

struggle was going on all round Krasno, another section of the invading troops made a descent on the coast of Finland, and occupied the road right up to St. Petersburg, or Petrograd, as it is now called. Important bridges were taken by assault, and the conditions of actual warfare were represented as closely as possible.

Many soldiers collapsed at these evolutions on the grand scale in consequence of the unusual strain. The heat was terrific, and after the troops had passed eastward several of my friends informed me that they found men lying completely prostrate. Russian soldiers are trained in such a manner that they are expected to accustom themselves to actual war conditions, so that they shall be able to take the field at a moment's notice against any enemy.

During all these operations, I may say, the temperature was much higher than anything we are accustomed to experience in England. The men were dressed, however, to withstand the heat. The majority of them wore clean white linen blouses, black trousers, top-boots, and a round cap, and the entire outfit only cost the Government a very small sum per man. Nothing more practical or economical have I seen in any army, and were the system adapted to this country and our colonies, there

would be a great saving to the nation and increased comfort to the soldiers, who, during the summer months, find it a trying matter to march and manœuvre in the present tight-fitting uniforms.



BAYONET AND SWORD

CHAPTER X

BAYONET AND SWORD

DURING my residence at St. Petersburg, I often attended the School of Arms, and from what I saw there was not much impressed by the performance of the officers as swordsmen. Great attention, however, was given to bayonet-practice. The bayonet is undoubtedly the favourite weapon of the Russian soldier, and in his heavy hands it is extremely effective. It was Suvoroff's weapon, as we have seen. In the present war it is playing an unexpected part, and the time and trouble spent on bayonet tactics evidently have not been wasted.

The Russians, being heavy of build, always endeavour when fighting to get to close quarters, so that their generally superior weight may tell. In the last war, Japanese nimbleness and staying powers were sometimes more than a match, however, for the strength and weight of their opponents. In recent encounters with the Austrians the bayonet made havoc with their ranks, and will again when-

ever the stolid soldier of the Tsar faces his enemy.

Russian commanders have such great belief in the "Shtyck," as they call it, that much time is given to teaching its use. In an engagement the infantry always march with bayonets screwed on the end of their rifles; they are so used to this that the increased weight does not interfere with the accuracy of firing. As a rule, they prepare to use the weapon directly they come within 150 yards of the front ranks of the enemy, and do not "fix bayonets" at the last moment, as is the custom in some European armies. This is an unwise practice, as in the excitement of attack a soldier is apt to forget all about his bayonet until it is too late to affix it. The Japanese, who are very skilful in the use of this arm, usually affix it when about 350 feet from the antagonist, with the result that the Russians, in the last war, often forestalled them by rushing to the counter-attack before the Japs were ready to engage.

Experience has shown that when the attacking party is able to approach within a hundred yards of the opponent the shooting of the latter has very little effect, for the troops, unless unusually cool and well disciplined, begin to fire wildly directly the enemy comes to such close quarters. Russian soldiers therefore make it a general rule to advance

to the counter-attack with the bayonet as soon as possible. Generally, these tactics are extremely successful.

The Guards, who are always stationed in and round the capital, are specially trained in the use of this formidable weapon, and when things look very black these splendid troops, who with the Roumanians took the almost impregnable fortress of Plevna at the point of the bayonet, are called out as a *dernier ressort*. If I am not mistaken, the Guards were not ordered out to the Far East in the Japanese campaign until all chances of victory had vanished. But in the present war there is reason to believe that they are being used in East Prussia. If this is the case, it is quite easy to understand why the Germans have had to retreat and to entrench themselves in their second line of defence.

As swordsmen, if the Russians do not seem brilliant, the Cossacks are and always have been very skilful. Their favourite weapon, however, is the long lance, which they wield with deadly dexterity. Many of them are also expert with the lasso, throwing it for a surprising distance and capturing the foe alive, if a trifle bruised, whenever they choose.

In shooting with the carbine, or short rifle, the Cossacks are extremely efficient, and often, on account of their coolness and their marvellous eye-

sight, are employed as sharpshooters to pick off items of the enemy's forces from a distance. There is little doubt, however, that the chief power of the Russian soldier lies in his bayonet, not in the rifle, which is rather too scientific a weapon for the village peasant to handle; he has not the requisite skill, touch, and finesse which belong to French, Belgian, or English soldiers. Military experts hold the opinion that the Prussian victory at Tannenberg, in East Prussia, was solely due to the superiority of the German cannon taken from the fortresses of Thorn and Gaudenetz, and to the new inventions of Krupp, which have shown their advantage over the Russian Horse Artillery, constructed on French models.

LIABILITY TO SERVE

CHAPTER XI

LIABILITY TO SERVE

THE number of men to be called to the colours annually is decided by the Imperial Senate, according to the report of the Minister of War. Theoretically, the entire male population between the ages of twenty-one and forty-four years is liable to serve, either in the regulars or in the militia; but there are many causes of exemption.

Speaking broadly, the term of service in the first line, or active army, is three years in the infantry, field and fort artillery, four years in the other departments of the Army. The soldier then enters the reserve, in which he remains for fourteen or fifteen years, undergoing during this period two trainings per annum of six weeks each. Having completed eighteen years in the first line of the reserve, he passes to the militia or last reserve. Service here is for five years—i.e. until the soldier attains the age of forty-three.

The Territorial Army is organised into groups of Regulars, Cossacks, Militia and Landsturm. On

a peace footing the Cossacks are only maintained at one-third of their proper war strength. A Russian regiment probably contains more men than that of any other country when on a peace footing; including officers, musicians, non-commissioned officers and men, it numbers 1900; but in war time this increases to 4000. A regiment of cavalry usually consists of six squadrons; a squadron comprises 1000 men and 900 horses, exclusive of officers. Cossack regiments consist of six "sotnias," or hundreds, of horsemen—600 men. The Cossacks, unlike the cavalry, have preserved their own national organisation, and have not copied the military organisation of others.

I should say that at least 65 per cent of the conscripts, when they join, can neither read nor write. The percentage of illiterates among the people at large is still greater. The officers have then to teach these ignorant men their alphabet, the three R's, and other elements of education, and considering that some of the poor fellows are little better than barbarians, the task is not an easy one. There is small doubt that the Government, which since the days of Nicholas I has kept the people in ignorance, is much to blame for the backward state of the masses. Russian officers have told me that some of the recruits from outlying districts do not even know their

left leg from their right, and that in order to enlighten them a wisp of straw had to be tied to one leg, a wisp of hay to the other. Then, by degrees, with the repeated call of "Hay" or "Straw" they mastered this intricate problem! Such exceptional cases, however, were probably Finns, not true Russians or Tartars, for both these races are very intelligent. Many of the Finns settled along the course of the Volga are practically heathen, and astonishingly dense. The soldier on the average is not so backward as in the Turkish war. In these days he reads the newspapers; in the last generation he could only smoke them—i.e. convert them into cigarette-papers.

Roughly speaking, the terms of service vary according to education. If a man has passed through the university, he serves two years in the line and sixteen in the reserves; if through the secondary schools, he does three years and fifteen respectively; but if he has been brought up in the national schools he must put in his full time. Professors and learned men whose accomplishments are exceptionally valuable to the State are generally free from military duties.

Universal service was first established by law on the first of January, 1874. The practice of paying the Crown a certain sum to be exempt is not per-

mitted; but it sometimes happens that doctors can be bribed to give certificates of ill-health which would free the recalcitrant conscript from his duties. I believe, however, that this practice is rare; according to my experience neither rank nor fortune can be used to prevent a man from serving his country when required to do so. I have, in fact, known cases both of poor men's sons and of the sons of wealthy people dying from their exertions at the manœuvres; the more favoured ones of society being treated in precisely the same way as the poorer men.

The liability of the Cossacks to serve is on quite a different footing from the regulars. Their term of service is for life, and affects the whole civil life of the community. They are still, as in olden times, a nation of soldiers. For this reason they enjoy the use of the Crown Lands in Russia and Siberia on very advantageous conditions, and are freed from direct taxation; they have also other valuable privileges which the Great Russians do not possess.

Exemption from service in the Army is as follows, generally speaking. Those who are unable to work in consequence of wounds, sickness, or deformity need not serve. The only son of a widowed mother, and the only son among several brothers who is able to work, or who is one of a family

of orphans; or the only grandson, living with grandparents who have no son to support them: these are exempt. An illegitimate son who is cared for by his mother, in the event of there being no other son capable of working for her, is free; and exiles also need not serve.

Many of the aborigines of Siberia, belonging to Tobolsk, Tomsk, Yenesiesk, Yakutsk, and Kamschatka, are exempt from service; the inhabitants of Turkestan and subjects of the Grand Duchy of Finland are excluded, but in place of military duties they have to pay an annual contribution to the Imperial Exchequer. The Finns are not considered sufficiently loyal to be enrolled; they also pay a military tax. Since 1912 this tax has been increased annually, until it now amounts to 16 million marks (£640,000). The Caucasians, who are even more unreliable than the Finns, also contribute in the same way an exemption-tax. With the Cossacks, reasons for exemption are practically the same as among the regular troops. There are so many of these opportunities for evading service, that one cannot say that conscription presses so hardly upon the Russian people as it does upon other nations in Europe, such as the Germans, Austrians, French and Italians.

Service in the land forces is as follows: for those

who enter the infantry and light artillery, three years; for those who enter all other branches (including the flotilla), four years. Service in the reserves is divided into two categories, of which the second is intended exclusively for filling up the secondary troops and the rear establishments. It terminates when the soldier attains his thirty-ninth year, after which he is in the militia. Persons who enter the service after the year in which they are called to arms have to make good the time lost by joining the reserves, but not after the age of forty-three, for then they retire from the military life. All who can bear arms are liable for the militia, also all who have escaped service in the regular army when lots were drawn. Volunteers are obliged to serve eighteen years—two years in the line and sixteen in the reserves. In the event of a volunteer passing the officers' examination, his term of service is shortened still more, to twenty months. The volunteers have also the privilege of living in the officers' quarters during a portion of their time of active service. Those who pay for their keep and clothing have many favours, and for this class the life is not half so severe as it is under ordinary conditions.

DISCIPLINE

CHAPTER XII

DISCIPLINE

IN spite of the friendly, almost fatherly spirit existing between the officers and their subordinates I should say that the discipline in the Russian Army is more severe than in any other European force. Never shall I forget the picture in the Imperial Academy of Arts, at St. Petersburg, representing an incident that occurred in one of the many wars against Persia. In this particular conflict it was found impossible to transport the artillery across some deep fissures in the roads over which the guns must pass before they could be placed in position. As the ground was rocky, and there was no earth or loose timber to fill the wide cracks, the officer in charge was at his wits' end to know how to get each heavy piece over the difficult bit of road. In desperation, he finally asked if any of his men would sacrifice themselves by lying down in the hollow and letting the guns proceed over their recumbent bodies. Strange to say, about a dozen came forward to volunteer for this dreadful

task; uncomplaining, they allowed the heavy artillery to roll across their quivering bodies, out of which the blood and life were soon crushed by the un pitying cannon. To such lengths goes the spirit of obedience and self-sacrifice ingrained in the soldiers of the Tsar. In Russian military history many similar instances are chronicled—incidents which make us Western nations almost horror-stricken at the unconcern with which human life is treated. During the reign of Ivan the Terrible, of Paul, and of Nicholas other events took place which equal in vividness the one I have mentioned.

Being half an Asiatic, and at the same time a fatalist, the soldier sets small value on his own life or on that of another. This, with his want of nerves, makes him a formidable enemy, and when properly trained, fed, and led he is capable of conquering the most cruel or ferocious people on earth. A race that could hold its own against the fierce Tartars and Mongols for centuries, and finally subdue them, can accomplish anything in the way of heroism and endurance.

The Russian military code of laws is even more severe than the German, and offences which in England would be punished with imprisonment or expulsion are in Russia punishable with the death penalty. Disciplinary punishment is inflicted on

the rank and file, and on the commissioned officers by extra service, arrest, expulsion from the Army and imprisonment. During my seven years' residence at Cronstadt executions both of officers and men in the garrison were not infrequent. Most of these penalties were for being mixed up with revolutionary propaganda or for mutiny. Soldiers who in a state of intoxication struck their superior officers were shot without mercy. At Sveaborg, according to the evidence of a Finnish engineer who was present at the execution of the mutinous artillerymen of the garrison, every second man was shot; but before being ranged in line for the final tragic scene each man had to dig his own grave.

Those who do not suffer death are often sent to Siberia to work in the mines, or are compelled to join a disciplinary battalion, where the most menial and trying labours are inflicted on delinquents—frequently so arduous that the men do not survive.

The Superior Court-Martial is in St. Petersburg, and consists of generals and highly placed officers. This court has power to imprison offenders in a fortress, to sentence them to exile in Siberia, to expel them from the service, to degrade them, and to condemn them to death.

In this short work it is impossible to give in detail the various punishments meted out to those

who infringe the military code. Owing to their severity the discipline in the Russian Army is the envy of all those martinets who set little or no value on human life or independence of spirit. A slight notion of its range, and of how little the soldier troubles about killing a fellow-creature, may be obtained from a curious anecdote related to me while I was staying at the camp at Krasno. The victim on this occasion was an unfortunate Jewish contractor, who used to supply hay and provisions for the troops. It happened that one day he was exceptionally pertinacious, sending to demand money from the officer in charge of the regiment. At last the officer, losing patience on being so continually importuned, exclaimed petulantly: "Oh, hang the Jew! I am too busy to attend to him." The soldiers standing by took the officer at his word. Seizing the Jew, they hauled him into the open and hanged him there and then without any further ado.

A few minutes after they returned, jubilant, and said: "Evrei povjesen, vash blagorodni!—The Jew is hanged, your high-born!" "What?" shouted the officer, horrified; "do you mean that you have killed the man?"

"Yes, your high-born!"

"Who gave you that permission?"

“You yourself, your high-born.”

It was of no use explaining to the men that his hasty speech had been merely an irritated exclamation and that the last thing he had meant was that the Jew should be really hanged. His men had been brought up to carry out every order immediately, without asking questions, and this was merely the result of the system. Nothing could be done, so a report was sent to the highest military authorities explaining how the mistake had occurred with the result that both the officer and the men who had carried out his “order” were imprisoned. But it was not for long. After a brief term of confinement they were released. The men were rewarded for their obedience, and the officer was promoted for having his men under such excellent control! Truly, in Russia “Shezn copjeke—Life is worth a farthing!”

OFFICERS AND FRIENDS IN HIGH
PLACES

CHAPTER XIII

OFFICERS AND FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

MY relations with Russian officers and commanders have on the whole been exceedingly pleasant. During twenty-seven years spent in many parts of the country I continually came into contact with officers of all ranks, from the highest general to the simplest rough sergeant. "Speak of a man as you find him" is an excellent adage, and in this hasty reminiscence of my friends in authority I shall endeavour to hold to it.

The first officer of notable rank I met was bluff old Admiral K——, the former Governor of Cronstadt with its enormous garrison of 40,000 men. Admiral K——, who had served in the Far East, was of Cossack or Little Russian origin. His bullet-head, thick neck, massive forehead, broad chest and long, drooping moustache reminded me of Taras Bulba, the mighty Cossack Hetman whose life and exploits Gogol, the Dickens of Russia, has recorded in one of his finest works.

I also made the acquaintance of another admiral, the commandant of the fortress, in whom the late Alexander III had the most implicit faith. In this he was justified, for a more trusty and honourable servant could not be found than this kindly old sea-dog, now, I am sorry to say, gone to his fathers. Before leaving Cronstadt for good, this admiral invited me to a splendid lunch, and took me over some of the forts. On expressing my surprise that he should show me, an Englishman, this favour, he replied: "We have no Dreyfus here!"—alluding to the fact that Jews were not then allowed to serve in the Army. But the sly old sailor did not show me the newer forts he had secretly built about ten miles outside the city at a cost of several million pounds, "for his friends the English," as he jokingly remarked, "the next time they pay Cronstadt a visit." These forts are furnished with the heaviest Krupp guns that could be obtained, which, with the mines that are laid in the narrow channel, render the place practically impregnable.

I spent seven years in this "Little Siberia," as the officers called the town, and resided with three naval men, who had been all round the world and now lived together as merry a life as did the Three Musketeers. One of them was a lieutenant of Hungarian origin, a member of the staff of the Tsar's

yacht; the second, a naval engineer, was of German extraction; the third, a remarkably clever Japanese scholar, was of pure Swedish blood. Little did we think, when they used to dress in Japanese costumes and drink tea in the Eastern manner, that in a few years they would be engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Japanese whose language and peculiar social ceremonials this member of our party had mastered so thoroughly. Like most Russian officers, they were all splendid linguists, speaking English, French and German with equal fluency. They had all been to Japan, and had married there, and, as with many other Europeans, the three little Japanese wives had made these world-wanderers so happy and comfortable that they did not wish to return. But at the call of duty they said the sad farewells, and came back to "little Siberia" to work and perhaps to remember.

When I eventually removed to St. Petersburg, my duties as foreign correspondent brought me into contact with officers of the Guards, from whom I learnt a good deal about not only the Russian Army, but the other Continental forces, the qualities of which we were continually discussing. To me the most interesting of all these friends was General Mansers of the Imperial Staff, with whom I lived for three years. His name had been corrupted from

Manners, and he informed me that he was descended from Lord Manners, Duke of Rutland, who fled to Sweden after the battle of Tewkesbury or one of the great struggles that took place in the Wars of the Roses. When Finland was taken over by Russia many Swedish officers entered the Russian service.

This general, a handsome little man with aristocratic bearing, had two ambitions—to see his ancestral estates in England, and to marry an English wife. Unfortunately he died before he could carry out either of these laudable aims. General Mansers spoke French and Swedish to perfection. He frequently visited Berlin, where he was much impressed by the Prussian troops; he told me that he detested the Prussians, but could not help admiring their Guards, than which he had seen no finer body anywhere. He had only once been to London; had he seen our Grenadier Guards and the Highlanders he might have altered his opinion, for better soldiers it would be difficult to find than these brave fellows who have so successfully withstood the attacks of the flower of the German Army.

General Mansers, who was a keen student of history, used to affirm that there were only seven great “Polkovodzee” (military leaders) who by genius had transformed the art of war: these were, if I re-

member correctly, Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Cæsar, Eugene of Savoy, Gustavus Adolphus, Marshal Saxe and Napoleon. Why Moltke, Marlborough and Wellington were not included in the list I could not understand; but not being a military expert I deemed it wiser to accept this dictum in silence. According to students, Cromwell and Charles XII were great cavalry leaders, but not "Polkovodzee."

In the same house where I then lived—in fact, in the adjoining apartments—was the great-grandson of that famous Swedish officer Colonel Michelson, who suppressed the insurrection of the Cossack Pugacheff after several of Catherine's ablest generals had been defeated. This young officer, who was only about twenty-eight years of age, was exceedingly handsome, tall, fair, of erect carriage, with blue eyes, golden hair, and a fresh ruddy complexion. Although his family had resided in Russia since the days of Catherine II, he preserved the Viking appearance unaltered, in common with many Russian officers whose Varangian ancestors came over in the ninth and tenth centuries. Michelson was remarkably studious, and spent most of his time reading up for examinations, or in the study of books on tactics and strategy. He resembled more the type of officer I had often met

in Germany than the merry, happy-go-lucky and extravagant Russian of the 'eighties whom I so often encountered at balls and supper-parties. "Wein, weib, und gesang" then occupied their attention, just as tennis, polo, cricket, hunting and other sports absorb the superfluous energy of many of our own men. The bitter lesson of the Japanese War, however, taught many a thoughtless, reckless young officer that soldiering means more than pleasure-seeking, and that sooner or later comes a day when those who neglect to make themselves proficient in their profession must pay a heavy penalty. So it happened with many a merry soul on the battlefields of Mukden and on the Yalu River.

The lessons of that sanguinary campaign have caused the General Staff to introduce numerous reforms, often due to the painstaking care of General Koorapatkine, who, if not a first-class leader, is without doubt a second Kitchener as regards power of organisation and looking after the material needs of the men committed to his charge. The officers have become much more serious than they were in the days before so many disasters befell their country's arms. Judging from what I learnt on the Continent prior to the outbreak of the present Armageddon, the money, time and care have not been wasted, and the Russian Army now in action is far

more efficient than it has been for very many years. An instance occurs in the aviation department; large sums have been spent, until in aeroplanes Russia is almost on a level with France and Germany. With Zeppelins and other dirigibles she is far behind still, and may suffer in consequence.

After leaving St. Petersburg I spent several summers at Krasno Selo, where the manœuvres are held; there I constantly met officers of high rank. The most interesting of all was General R——, adjutant to Alexander III, and former commandant of a large section of the artillery stationed always on the Austrian frontier. A jollier soul than this old general I have seldom known. Although nearly seventy, he had all the energy and vitality of youth. He laughed, danced, sang and even drank with the liveliest; but with all his gaiety he kept thoroughly *au fait* with his professional work. He delighted in gathering friends round him and relating anecdotes and adventures of his younger days in the Turkish and other wars. He had fought under three Emperors, and naturally had plenty of good stories. One of the most thrilling was a tale of his battery in the Turkish campaign. At Plevna all the men of the battery except himself had been shot down, and he expected every moment to be killed by the advancing enemy, whose soldiers were steadily

ascending the slope to take the guns. Seeing that resistance was hopeless, he coolly leaned against a field-piece and lit a cigarette. As he smoked, the Turks drew nearer and nearer with fixed bayonets. Just at the critical instant, when he thought all was over, a squadron of Cossacks came galloping round the hill; they soon routed the Turks, the majority of whom paid dearly for their rash advance.

This officer, who was the grandson of one of the last Hospodars of Roumania, was also of foreign origin, like so many others. When we remember that thousands of these men are of German, Swedish, Scottish and Polish birth or extraction, we can understand why they are not as efficient as the officers of other countries. Studying the Russian Army and Navy List, we shall be astonished at the number of non-Russian names; even Tartar, Mongolian, Caucasian and Greek. As long as they have gone through the military school, any post, except that of Minister, is open to them, and even that is obtainable if the aspirant belongs to the State religion. Among old Scottish families that have made a home for themselves in Russia and have become naturalised the Gordons are famous. General Gordon practically ruled during the absence of Peter the Great abroad. Admiral Greig, an-

other Scotsman, reorganised the Navy under Catherine; Barclay de Toll fought Napoleon in 1812; and Todleben raised the wonderful fortifications of Sevastopol that gave so much trouble to the Allies. There are also Levins, Leslies, Stewarts, Clayhills and a host of other Scottish names, the majority of which came into Finland and the Baltic Provinces during the reigns of Gustavus Adolphus or Peter the Great, or before these provinces were annexed. Others are of Polish, Swedish and German origin. One of Catherine's most trusted generals was an Englishman, who rejoiced in the homely name of Brown. The great Skobeleff is said to have been of English origin, and traced his descent from a Captain Skobel, an officer in the army of Catherine II. Though perhaps not so refined and cultivated as our own, these gentlemen are for the most part hearty, jolly, manly fellows; fond of liquor, dancing, fun, cards, and the fair sex—possibly too fond of these pleasures to be good soldiers. In such a vast army there must be all categories—frivolous, ignorant, cultured, studious—as in other armies. But I should say that officers and non-commissioned officers of the line regiments in Russia, though certainly tough, rough and ready, hardy soldiers, are inferior in training and education to the English and German and

French. In the Guards, however, and in the regiments stationed along the Austrian and German frontiers, there are many brilliant officers and fine soldiers, who in the Japanese War had no chance of showing their ability. Some of these are now beginning to show what metal they are made of, doubtless to the surprise of the Austrians.

From one of the leading generals who took an active part in the siege of Plevna, I learnt that the military arrangements were so inefficient that had it not been for the corruption of the Turkish Pashas the entire army of invasion would have perished on the other side of the Danube. The Russians prefer to "muddle through" like ourselves; but that bad habit has cost them so much in men and money that in future they will trust less to luck and more to sound preparation.

Among the men who have done so much to improve the fighting forces we must not forget the late General Dragoniroff, whose handbooks on the subject of soldiering have been translated into almost every European tongue. Another notable General is Rennenkampf, who in the Japanese War gained great distinction for himself and his cavalry. In the present conflict this brilliant man is again winning honours. General Linevitch, the "old wolf," was also the idol of his men in Manchuria,

where he saw more active service than Koorapatkine and others who were there before him; not until the Army was in difficulties was this old warrior appointed to the position he should have held at first. At Mukden he retreated in good order to Tieling, with his entire army intact, while those of Koorapatkine and Orleff were fearfully broken; in addition to saving his men, he brought with him to Tieling seven Japanese cannon and several thousand prisoners. Shortly after the conclusion of the war General Linevitch, worn out with toil, and disappointed by the ingratitude and neglect which had been his portion, was called to his well-earned rest.

Michenko, a Little Russian, is another celebrated cavalry officer; but whether he will again achieve fame remains to be seen. Grippenbergh, Kaulbars and Stackelberg are three more excellent commanders of whom, if they still live, we ought to hear in the course of the fighting on the Continent. The Army has many hitherto unknown leaders only awaiting an opportunity to distinguish themselves; such a one is General Russky, whose name none of us had heard until he brought it into world-prominence by his fine action at Lemberg.

Most of the skilled generals who took part in the last war are now too old for active service, or have passed away. Koorapatkine, after writing

the memoirs in which he endeavoured to acquit himself of blame for the series of defeats sustained by the forces under his control, has retired to his beautiful Finnish estate, where he will hear only echoes of the clash of arms. General Sacharoff, Chief of Staff, I believe was assassinated. General Tserpnitsky, brave and talented, was killed at Port Arthur, whilst Grippenbergh and Stackelberg, of Swedish and German origin respectively, fell into disgrace, probably owing to their foreign birth. The modern Russian resents being led by men of foreign extraction, though there have been many officers of mixed blood—among them Souvoroff, Gordon, Barclay de Toll, Bagriaton, Gourko, Count Wittenstein, Todleben, Radetsky and Skobeleff. Koora-patkine was, I think, a pure Russ, and so was Koute-soff, the Russian "Cunctator," though one can hardly term them first-class military leaders. There is a tendency now to eliminate the foreign element, and the last Ministers for War were pure Russians.

Among prominent officers who doubtless will have much to say during the present war we may note the following: General J. Martsen, Commander-in-Chief of the Wilna Military Circuit; General R. Suchomiloff, Minister for War; the Grand Duke Nicholas, General of the Cavalry, Commander-in-Chief of the Regiments of the Guard for the mili-

tary district of St. Petersburg; General Skalon, Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Military Circuit; and General Ivanoff, Commander-in-Chief of the Kieff Circuit. As this war goes on we shall probably hear a good deal of these clever men, also, no doubt, of others such as Russky, whose names have not yet become highly distinguished.

MILITARY SCHOOLS

CHAPTER XIV

MILITARY SCHOOLS

IN Petrograd, Moscow, Odessa, Omsk, Tomsk, Irkutsk, and many other towns of Russia and Siberia are some very fine military academies. These buildings are on so elaborate a scale that they might well be taken for palaces; others, such as the Sappers' School in Petrograd and the Corps de Pages, have actually been palaces in days gone by. This is a subject which some of our own officers might well take up, for it is worthy of attention. I do not remember how many thousands of officers the schools turn out annually, but it is a very impressive total, for there are about 70,000 officers in the Russian Army—30,000 commissioned and 40,000 non-commissioned. The majority of the best officers are educated in these academies, which I have often visited with great satisfaction and pleasure. I have also frequently attended the shooting contests at Krasno Selo between the cadets and the infantry of the Guards, and have been surprised to see that the highly trained cadets from the military academies

made better scoring than the ordinary artillery-men. Perhaps this could be explained by the fact that the latter are neither so well trained nor so scientific as the cadets.

That excellent work, "Die Russische Arme," published in Berlin in 1912, has some pertinent remarks on this subject. The author says: "The technical education of the officers is looked after by the various military academies, which train and educate the cadets according to the branch of service they have decided to enter. The Nicholas Military Academy prepares candidates for the staff after they have served three years in the regular army. The Michael Artillery Academy, named after the Grand Duke Michael, trains officers for the artillery of the Guard. The Nicholas Academy of Engineers is for officers who wish to become military engineers and sappers. The Alexander Juridical Academy is for the benefit of officers who wish to be instructors in the military schools. Another academy trains officers for the commissariat department; while lastly, the Medical Academy takes charge of the education of the army doctors."

It would take too long to describe all the similar military institutions in the Empire. They are all being maintained in a high state of efficiency at the cost of many millions of roubles annually. Enough,

however, has been written to show what a great amount of energy and wealth is directed into the single channel of the Army, also to indicate what a glowing future is in store for Russia directly her vast resources become more consolidated and better organised. Her very vastness is her greatest weakness, and if she does not emerge triumphant from the present struggle it will not be for the want of men, money, or natural wealth, but by reason of the internal dissensions which are so liable gradually to weaken her gigantic power for offence. In much the same way racial and religious hatred is paralysing the strength and efficiency of the Austrian Army. The constant and, it seems, inevitable internal discontent is Russia's greatest enemy, rather than the power or number of the Austro-German troops, against whom, so far, she has more than held her own.

In taking her Army into consideration, we must remember that a very considerable portion of it cannot be used for offensive purposes. I should say that at least one million men must be kept in Finland, the Baltic Provinces, Poland, Little Russia, and the Caucasus to watch the disaffected elements of the population and to repress any attempts to throw off allegiance to the Tsar. If the Poles, Finns, Caucasians, Little Russians, and the inhabi-

tants of the Baltic Provinces are loyal and give no trouble, Russia should not only be able to inflict a crushing defeat on Germany, but might also annex Galicia and the Slavonic provinces of Austria; thus would her power and influence over the Slavs be increased. But her offensive power, as I have noted, entirely depends on the internal political state of the country; and on this depends essentially her success in the terrible struggle.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

CONCLUDING REMARKS

WHETHER Russia is victorious or not, whether she is triumphant or humiliated, in the Titanic struggle, it is evident that it is only a question of time for her to become the first power in Europe. Greater Russia has been closed too long to Western influences, and if this war stimulates interest in her great future and vast resources it will have at least one bright side. Siberia alone, which contains some of the richest corn-growing land in the world, is about twice the size of our Continent. It is said that the black-earth belt, on which the finest crops can be raised, stretches for several thousand miles, from the Altai mountains in Asia to the Carpathians in Europe. On this sufficient wheat could be grown to feed the whole of Europe and a large part of Asia besides. There is so much spare land, in fact, that it could support if necessary 600 millions of inhabitants instead of the present 180 millions.

Russia, although only a young State, has shown that her people have been gifted by nature with those intellectual and spiritual qualities without

which no race can ever attain true greatness; she has produced men of the first rank in wellnigh every important walk of life. In literature we find Pushkin, Lermontoff, Gogol, Turgenieff, Tolstoi, Dostoi-effsky, Gorki, Tchekoff, and many others; some of these may well be compared with the greatest geniuses of ancient or modern times. Gogol resembles Dickens, but he is a Dickens full of poetry and unfathomable depths of feeling and sorrow. Those who have heard "the bitter laughter of his weeping," as he calls his writings, do not easily forget it.

In music, Russia has many great names, some of which are beginning to be known in England. Already she has produced a National Opera, with notable composers such as Glinka, Rubenstein, Tchaikoffsky, Rimsky Korsakoff, Dargominski. Her engineers have spanned the Empire with railways which are the wonder of the travelling world; in art and in medicine her sons are making themselves known, and as soldiers we have seen their imprint on history. If in the space of two hundred years Russia could attain such distinction, what will she accomplish when her millions are educated, when they have had the benefit of the increased intercourse with the worlds of art and science which we and our nearer neighbours now enjoy? Her

power for good or for evil will be doubled, and the day will approach when Napoleon's prophecy, though delayed, will come true.

Over the future, however, a veil of darkness lies; the horizon is now clouded by the fog and dust of war—a war in which the rougher passions hold sway and master the finer instincts of the people. It seems that we must pass through this Inferno before Europe will learn how to maintain peace without the aid of cruel armaments that even in tranquil times tend to crush the life out of so-called Christian and civilised nations. The present war, the final effects of which we shall never see, is the most terrible in the world's history; in comparison with it all others seem but child's play. The officers and experienced soldiers taking part in it say that they have never known anything to equal the magnitude of its horrors or the suffering it has already caused.

A Russian writer, whose name is unfamiliar to me, says: "In truth, the whole world now beholds what terrific proportions modern warfare can attain, and one involuntarily asks the question, What is going to happen next, if we proceed still further—in our Christian era—in perfecting the implements for mutual destruction? There can only be one answer to this question: humanity is march-

ing towards self-extermination. War will thus become an absurdity, since all the belligerents will become mutual exterminators of one another; and the word 'victor' will bear the same meaning for all—Ruin."

APPENDIX

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A FEW details of the extent of Russia's territory may be of interest as giving an idea of the resources open to her in times of emergency.

The total area of the Empire in Europe and North Asia exceeds 8,660,000 square miles—that is, it forms one-sixth of the land surface of the globe. The length of the land frontier line in Europe is 2800 miles; in Asia, nearly 10,000 miles. The greatest breadth of territory from north to south is 2932 miles, and the greatest length from east to west is 7680 miles.

This tremendous expanse is divided into eighteen Provinces, seventy-seven Governments, and two Circuits. A single Russian Government is frequently the size of one of the largest of the other European States, while an "Oojezd" (District), the minor division of a Province, is often as large as Holland or Belgium. Germany and Austria combined are only equal in area to two of Russia's larger Governments.

As regards population, I have already given some remarkable figures. The immense increase, even

in the short period since the close of the war with Japan, shows perhaps better than anything else the marvellous vitality and power of recuperation of the Russian people. Of the total population of the Empire, the majority are Orthodox Slavs. There are about 10 million Catholic Poles, 5 million Lithuanians, 5 million Jews, 5 million Germans, and probably 13 million Tartars, Caucasians, Tchoovash, Finnish, and other races, from whom Russia can obtain vast numbers of soldiers if necessary.

I should say that over 100 million of the people belong to the Orthodox Greek Church; the remainder comprise Dissenters, Roman Catholics, Mahomedans, and Buddhists.

